

THE SPORT *of*
COLLECTING

By the same Author

CLIMBING AND
EXPLORATION IN
THE KARAKORAM
HIMALAYAS . . .

With 300 Illustrations by
A. D. McCORMICK.

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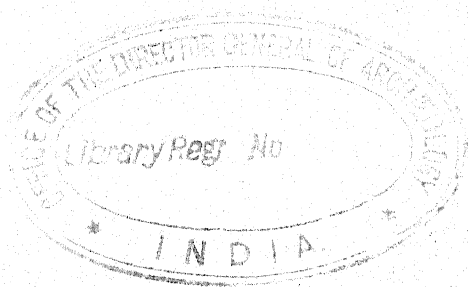




Photo by F. W. Nunn

ST. JOHN

Wooden figure, 14th century

(See p. 130)

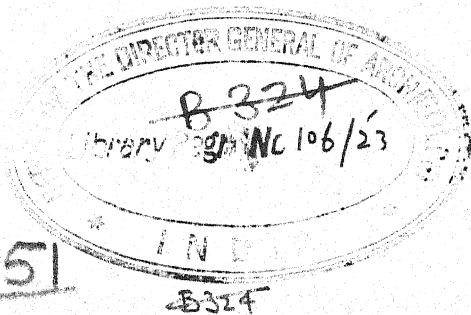
Frontispiece

THE SPORT *of* COLLECTING

By

SIR MARTIN CONWAY

*Late Slade Professor of Fine Art
in the University of Cambridge*



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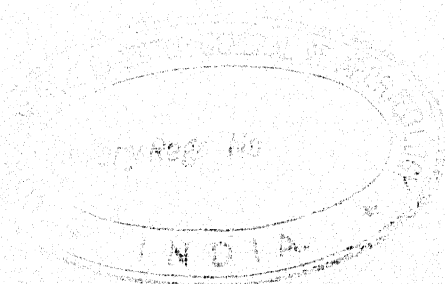
Dedication.

TO DR. WILHELM VON BODE,
*General Director of the
Berlin Museums.*

DEAR DR. VON BODE,

Over thirty-five years ago a callow art-student went to Berlin in quest of woodcuts in Dutch printed books of the fifteenth century. Your kindness to him began in those happy days, and has continued unbroken ever since. To catalogue your benefits would be a long tale. The last of them came only the other day, when you were good enough to read and give your blessing to this little book, which, with your permission, that same student now takes great pleasure in dedicating to you.

MARTIN CONWAY.

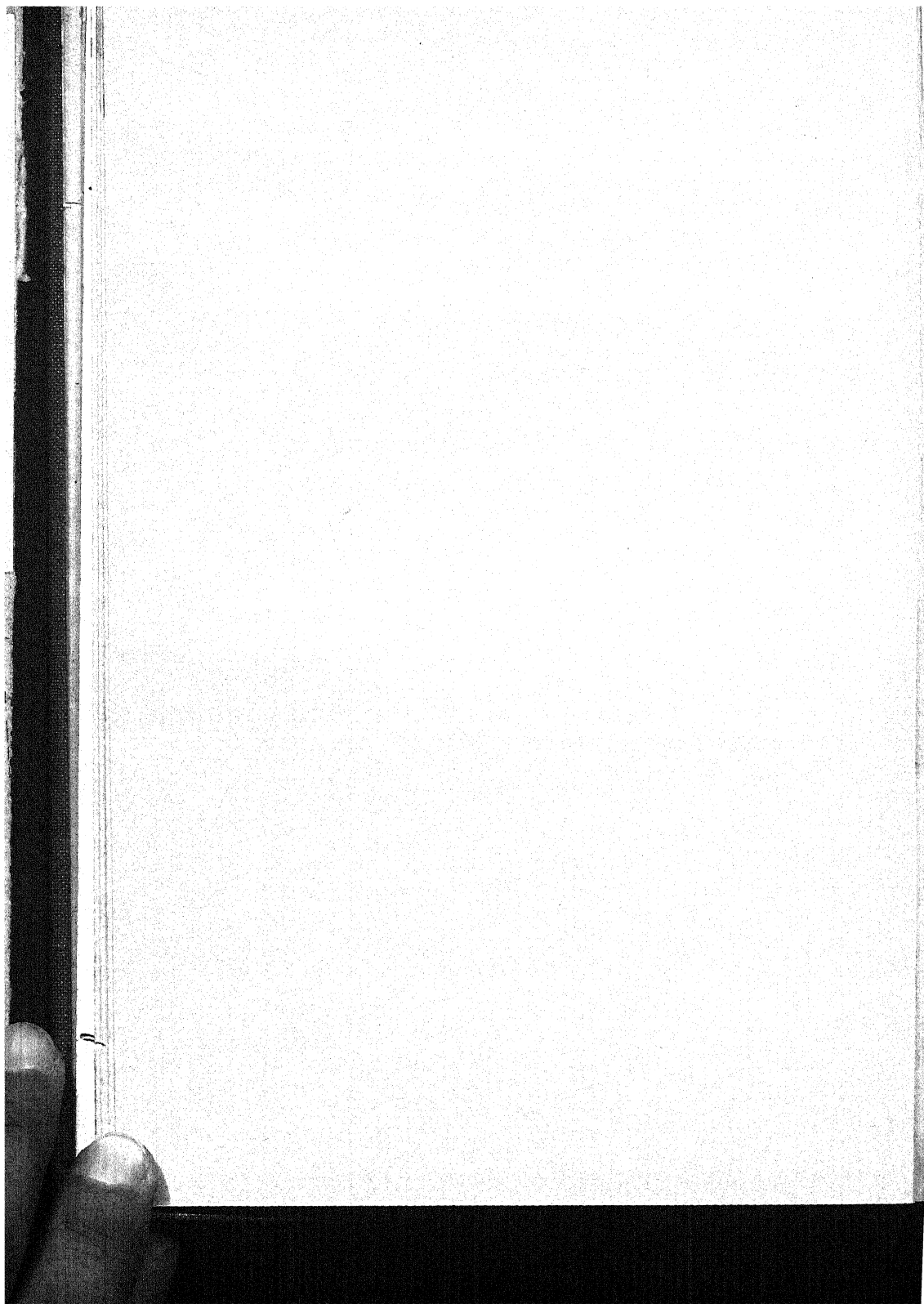


CONTENTS

	PAGE
Chapter I. A FALSE START - - - - -	7
„ II. THE HUNT IN MILAN - - - - -	16
„ III. THE FINDING OF A FOPPA - - - - -	26
„ IV. MORE FINDS IN MILAN - - - - -	38
„ V. HERE AND THERE IN ITALY - - - - -	48
„ VI. THE HUNT IN EGYPT - - - - -	61
„ VII. FROM INDIA TO PERU - - - - -	83
„ VIII. GREEK AND ROMAN ANTIQUITIES - - - - -	97
„ IX. A FIND OF GIORGIONES - - - - -	107
„ X. FURNITURE - - - - -	121
„ XI. HOW WE FOUND A CASTLE - - - - -	133

ILLUSTRATIONS

ST. JOHN : Wooden figure, 14th century -	-	<i>Frontispiece</i>
BEVILACQUA -	- - - - -	<i>facing p. 22</i>
NERI DI BICCI -	- - - - -	„ <i>p. 24</i>
FOPPA -	- - - - -	„ <i>p. 36</i>
LOTTO -	- - - - -	„ <i>p. 38</i>
ROMANINO -	- - - - -	„ <i>p. 44</i>
MORETTO -	- - - - -	„ <i>p. 46</i>
TIEPOLO -	- - - - -	„ <i>p. 48</i>
BRAMANTINO -	- - - - -	„ <i>p. 54</i>
SOLARIO -	- - - - -	„ <i>p. 57</i>
<i>Painter unrecognised</i> -	- - - - -	„ <i>p. 59</i>
GILT BRONZE CAT (from Beni Hasan) -	-	„ <i>p. 75</i>
TANAGRA AND ASIA MINOR TERRA-COTTAS -		„ <i>p. 78</i>
VARIOUS EGYPTIAN, PERUVIAN, AND OTHER OBJECTS -	- - - - -	„ <i>p. 78</i>
GANDHARA SCULPTURE -	- - - - -	„ <i>p. 86</i>
A GILT BUDDHA -	- - - - -	„ <i>p. 88</i>
ANTIQUE BUST -	- - - - -	„ <i>p. 98</i>
PORPHYRY BUST -	- - - - -	„ <i>p. 100</i>
GIORGIONE -	- - - - -	„ <i>p. 109</i>
<i>Dürer Drawing of 1495 (above). Detail of</i>		
<i>Painting by Giorgione (below) -</i>	- - -	„ <i>p. 110</i>
GIORGIONE -	- - - - -	„ <i>p. 112</i>
SCHOOL OF TINTORETTO -	- - - - -	„ <i>p. 118</i>
YSENBRANDT -	- - - - -	„ <i>p. 120</i>
ALLINGTON CASTLE IN 1909, FROM THE EAST -		„ <i>p. 133</i>
ALLINGTON CASTLE : GATEHOUSE -	- - -	„ <i>p. 138</i>
ALLINGTON CASTLE : OUTER COURTYARD -		„ <i>p. 138</i>



THE SPORT OF COLLECTING

CHAPTER I.

A FALSE START

THE passion for "collecting" must correspond with some deep-seated instinct in man. Children of tender age often fall under its sway, and it is the last passion that still masters the very old. I once knew an aged collector who was suffering all the ills that nature accumulates on the last years of some nonagenarians. His sight was feeble; he was deaf; he was often racked with pain. It seemed evident that his end was at hand. His days and nights had to be spent in an armchair, and each gasping breath seemed likely to be his last. To him entered a dealer of his acquaintance with a splendid K'ang Hsi *Famille verte* vase, which the old man had long wished to possess. The sight of it revived his forces; his breathing cleared; he sat erect in his chair, and presently, in the excitement of bargaining, was upon his feet striding about the room. The struggle and the victory revived him, and he lived on for several years before death finally won him, and the British Museum entered upon its inheritance.

Naked and owning nothing, we enter into the world, and the fewer material things we have to house and guard

the freer we remain ; yet upon most of us a necessity seems to be laid, not merely to acquire that kind of wealth which is strength, but to obtain possession of objects, not always beautiful, by which our lives thenceforward are conditioned, and our goings out and comings in suffer a daily fettered freedom.

As a child, I passed through the stages of collecting stamps, butterflies, and fossils in a more than usually vague and unscientific manner ; and it was not till after I had been pursuing the study of art-history many years that I yielded to the spell and became a collector of works of art. I can even fix the date when I caught the infection. It was in the early part of the month of May, 1887. I was spending two or three months in Milan. The famous Giovanni Morelli, the great connoisseur of Italian Art, was then living, and mine was the good fortune to be brought much in contact with him and with his scarcely less distinguished friend and follower, Dr. Gustavo Frizzoni.

Morelli was no mere dry-as-dust student, but a fully equipped man of the world, active in politics, socially gifted, and with a force of character that could not but impress itself upon a youthful admirer. One day, when I was in his apartment and he was discoursing upon painting, and illustrating his remarks by reference to his own collection of pictures, now the property of the city of Bergamo, he suddenly broke off to say : "The only way really to get a thorough knowledge of the old painters is to collect pictures. You ought to begin at once."

"Collect pictures," I said ; "that's very easy to recommend ; but how am I going to pay for them?"

"That's not difficult," he replied ; "they are cheap

enough, if you know how to look for them and where to find them. It's not so much money as an educated eye that a collector needs. If you were to find a previously unknown Raphael, the chances are you could buy it for a hundred francs. Anyhow, you must begin collecting at once."

"And, please, where and how am I to begin?" I asked.

"Well," he answered, "I will tell you how to begin. You have been studying the Milanese School very closely during the last few weeks, and by now you know the paintings and style of most of the artists. There is Vincenzo Foppa, for instance. Very few pictures by him are known, and yet he must have painted plenty, and probably several exist which have not yet been identified. Begin by going to all the small dealers' shops in Milan, and see if you can't find a forgotten Foppa in some dark corner; and, by way of stimulus, I will now bet you twenty francs that you don't find one, though I think it quite possible that you may."

We went away from Morelli's that afternoon, my wife and I, with our heads full of Foppa and the determination to win that twenty francs. The very next day I began that pilgrimage amongst the dealers' shops, which, except when I have been exploring mountains, has continued till the present time. We bent our steps at once to a café and asked for the local directory. It provided us with a list of dealers, and I remember that there were some fifty or more of them scattered over all parts of the city. Milan in those days was very different from Milan to-day, not merely in all the large and obvious differences, but quite as markedly from the point of view of a collector. Then the passionate hunt for old works of art was

only beginning. In Florence and Venice it had well begun, but it had scarcely extended to Milan, still less to the smaller cities. The number of little dealers was legion, because there was an abounding material for their trading. They were all loaded up with goods. The pavements in front of the shops, the shops themselves, the back premises, their own sitting and bedrooms, and all manner of neighbouring lofts, stables, and warehouses, were crammed with old stuff of many sorts, which was patiently awaiting buyers. In all this accumulation, of course, good things were astray amongst bad. If a man had an eye to distinguish, it was a mere question of labour before search was rewarded.

So I took the Milanese dealers in order, and religiously visited them all in rotation, and examined each one's stock completely before I went on to the next. It was a work of many long and tiring days. I think it was in the first of the smaller dealers I went to that we made our first purchase. It was a Venetian Virgin and Child with saints—one of those small altar-pieces, wider than they are tall, with a series of half-length figures about life-size. If I live to be a hundred, I shall not forget the enthusiasm of that purchase. It was, I believe, the first time I had seen a real "Old Master" out of a picture gallery or some famous private collection. Such objects had seemed inaccessible treasures of priceless value. And here was one that could be ours for a mere ten pounds. It was clearly a genuine old picture, certainly Venetian, not by me assignable to any special artist, but with the great Giovanni Bellini shining, if somewhat dimly, through. And then it had obviously been all painted over. Who could say, but that underneath that later painting a

genuine Bellini might not lie hid? Without hesitation, we paid our money, hired a cab, and carried the treasure off at once to our apartment.

It was a glorious home-coming! and adds lustre even now to the memory of that agreeable abiding-place. It stood in a remote corner of Milan, in the Porta Venezia direction, where was then much open land, with spacious gardens surrounding comfortable houses. Ours belonged to a peculiar Baronessa, a great dancer in her time, almost contemporary with Taglioni, but fallen upon less fortunate days, and compelled to let off part of her house. Besides our rooms, we had a large terrace stretching out beyond them and looking down upon the garden on two sides, and over a wall into a quiet lane on the third. Here, in fine weather, we used to dine, and such was our infatuation with the wonderful picture that we carried it out to the terrace for dinner and back to the salon when we went in. I rather think it was propped up in my bedroom at night. I could not bear to be separated from it for a moment. We were always finding new beauties in it—its splendid colour, its wonderful blues and reds. No Titian had ever seemed to us more rich. Such is the glorifying effect of ownership!

A second-rate picture that is one's own is finer than all the great galleries of the world that are public property. It is easy to tell us that we, you and I, share the ownership of the National Gallery; but that is mere talk. To own a picture is to be able to do what you please with it: to hang it where you please, to change it about, to look at the back of it, to show it to your friends, and to shut it up from people you don't like. A picture in a gallery belongs in any effectual fashion only to the director

of the gallery for the time being. He has the fun of it, and no one else. He can have it lifted about, the glass taken off it, the back turned round, the frame removed. No other kind of ownership is worth a rap. Whether a picture is in the Louvre or the Uffizi or the National Gallery is all one to a visitor; it is only by conscious pretence that he can make himself imagine a kind of proprietorship in one more than in the others. In a gallery, you are looked after by a guardian; you are kept away from close vision by a horrid bar. You can't sit where you please and smoke in comfort, while you enjoy for hours together the object of your delight. To own a single work of art is pleasure of an altogether different kind from looking at objects in a museum or public gallery. Hence the extraordinary blindness of owners to the real merits of their possessions. "A poor thing, but mine own," looks to its possessor so much finer than a far better thing belonging to someone else or to the public. It is difficult for an owner to imagine how little merit someone else may be able to find in what, to him, is so keen a source of delight. The glamour of possession is a reality. It enforces all beauties; it clouds over defects. There is nothing like it for awakening sensibility to what an artist intended to convey. It is at once stimulus and anæsthetic. It helps the eye to see what is there of beauty; it blinds the eye to faults and failures that would otherwise be glaringly apparent.

Such was our first experience of the effect of possession. We thought our poor picture was the finest thing on earth,—for the first day or two. It was better to sit at home and gaze at it than to spend our time before the master-pieces in the Brera. But presently the effect began to wear off. The over-painting became unpleasantly promi-

ment. We attributed to it all the faults of drawing and modelling, of which we began to be only too conscious. As the hours went by we became more sensible to these drops of bitter in our cup of sweetness. At last the suggestion was made that we should clean off the repaints from one little corner and see what the real picture underneath was like. I ran out for some turpentine and spirits of wine, and, with a bit of cotton-wool in each hand, saturated with the one and the other, I made tentative dabs at the extremity of the Child's foot down at the bottom of the panel. A beautifully drawn toe emerged from under the later smearing of paint, then another, finally the whole foot. It was damaged; but the whole was promising. The toes were excellently drawn. Our latent enthusiasm burst forth once more. We magnified the merit of what we had revealed, and imagination spread the like over the whole picture. We assigned every fault to the restorer, and every merit to the beclouded artist. The foot was like a certain foot by Cima; perhaps the picture was by him after all, and some horrid botcher had brought it to the pass from which we would now rescue it. Our decision was soon made. We would strip off the whole of the repaints and see our picture, for better or worse, as it actually was.

In a few minutes the deed was done. What a horrible experience! One more frightful detail after another emerged from beneath the kindly veil of modern paint. The only tolerably good feature was the little foot we had first revealed. The backs came off the heads. Wretchedly drawn ears appeared in strangely false positions on ill-shapen skulls. Unpaired eyes looked this way and that. Large patches of bare panel occurred, where all the old

paint had fallen or been bruised away. In one corner was the brown mark of a burn, where apparently a hot poker had been in contact with the picture. It was, indeed, a frightful daub. Our house of cards fell to the ground with a crash, and we sat silent and disgusted amid the ruins.

Thus it was that we bought, and very cheaply, an invaluable experience. We learnt what restorers can do. We realised that, in the great days, there had been bad painters as well as good, and that all Old Masters are not fine merely because they are old. We learnt that appearances may be very deceptive, and we plumbed with startling suddenness the immense depth of our also wide ignorance. A few days later a very differently laden cab carried us and our picture back to that little dealer's shop. There was no enthusiasm on board that journey, no glorious pride of possession. We hid the thing from the public gaze, and smuggled it across the pavement as quickly and unobtrusively as possible. The dealer was quite hospitable to the idea of taking it back. He could easily have it restored once more, and would allow us credit for what we had paid, less the ridiculously small sum we now learnt would suffice to pay for bringing the poor picture back to the condition in which we had acquired it. I wonder where that picture is now, and what it looks like? It can scarcely again have given to anyone even the brief delirium of joy we had from it; nor, perhaps, was there anyone both so green and so adventurous likely to come around and receive from it the priceless and enduring lesson which it yielded to us.

I am not going to pretend that this was the last time I have been taken in by forged or cleverly "restored" works of art. Forgers and semi-forgers are an inventive

tribe. As connoisseurship advances, so does their skill and initiative. Each new field of collecting opens up a new area for the forger's activities. The omnivorous collector must often buy his experience as he ventures into a fresh category of antiquities. But if we were once and again in future years to be victimised by specious "treasures," we never had so dramatic an emergence from so joyous a cloud of dreams, nor did we ever again make so headlong a plunge into wild and extravagant imaginings. Unfortunately, as the years pass, so passes the power of ecstasy. No moonlight any more is like the moonlight on the waters of our youth. No mountain panorama in all the splendour of clearest mid-day can be like the first views from mountain summits that greeted our wondering eyes, when, all glorious with a difficult ascent safely accomplished, we gazed forth in the passion of youth on a world actually fairer than any old prophet's vision of an imagined paradise.

CHAPTER II.

THE HUNT IN MILAN

THE incident of the Venetian picture was but byplay in our real quest, which was, to search for and find a Foppa. Those twenty francs of Morelli's had simply got to be won. So after the loss of less time than my narrative may perhaps suggest, I settled down seriously to pursue a steady and relentless search. Memory, as I try to recall those far-off days, brings before my mind's eye a confused vision of dirty *antichità* shops, dark, deep-laden in dust, malodorous. Usually there were a number of pieces of furniture in the style of Giovanni Batista Maggiolino, with which the houses of Milan seem to have been filled. They were, for the most part, inlaid chests-of-drawers and other pieces of bedroom furniture, and whole suites of them were to be had for little more than their price as old timber. They used to be heaped up on the pavements, and piled high in garrets and lofts. Everyone was selling them, and few desired to buy. Yet they were really very admirable work, beautifully inlaid, a kind of Italian Sheraton, and nowadays they command a good price, and are not easy to obtain. In an afternoon, I could have bought enough to panel a great room. I wonder where they have all gone to now.

In such places I sought long and carefully, finding and passing by many a good picture, either too costly for our notions of what was a reasonable price in those days, or of some school or period which I did not understand. How often in these later days have I regretted the economies of that time. Why did we not empty out our purses to the dregs? Why were we so foolish as not to plunge deeply into debt rather than, for instance, allow a genuine Gentile Bellini to slip through our fingers, when we might have captured it for a mere eighty pounds? I might have had a now well-known Giotto for seventy pounds. Alas for the foolish economies and abnegations of an imprudently prudent youth!

Each day I went to look at one or other of the known Foppas, to impress its style ever more and more distinctly on my memory; then off to the slums again to pursue the apparently endless quest. Of course, I encountered and recognised a certain number of forgeries, and, no doubt, failed to identify many more; but the surprising thing was the extraordinary number of genuine, but utterly bad, old pictures that had been swept together by dealers. The galleries of Europe contain on their walls many bad old pictures; their magazines are filled with a much larger quantity of worse; but it was a revelation to me then to discover that there still existed in the dark backgrounds of the dealers' warehouses an almost countless multitude of yet viler daubs, which had maintained a dishonoured existence throughout some four centuries, and were still hopeful of finding purchasers. I suppose they were painted by minor craftsmen in the smaller towns, or by itinerant journeymen going from place to place, perhaps for some domestic oratory or village chapel. Who can say that they

may not have stimulated as fervent devotions in simple hearts as were ever poured forth by Pope or Cardinal beneath some altar-piece by Raphael or Titian? Be that as it may, the search through these wrecks of bad or indifferent works of art was a sorry and fatiguing business. As daylight waned, and I gladly hied me back home from my slummy haunts, it was often with a sense of utter weariness, disgust, and failure. At last the day came when not only all the recognised art dealers of Milan had been visited, but all the furniture-menders, frame-makers, and gilders, and every discoverable person who added the sale of old goods to any other trade, had been visited by us, some of them more than once. We had not found the desired Foppa, though we had by no means drawn an absolute blank. One acquisition, indeed, we had made which came very near to what we were seeking, but before telling about that I ought, perhaps, to say something about who Foppa was.

I hope some of my readers may never have heard of him, because I am not writing this little book for my colleagues, the hard-shell students of art-history, but just for the entertainment of nice people who have other interests in life than the mere question who painted this or the other more or less obscure picture. Not that the work that leads to the decision of such apparently unimportant questions is not worth while. There is really no better fun than to hunt out forgotten facts of whatever kind, and bring order into any sort of neglected chaos. Fifty years ago, pictures were vaguely attributed to painters of repute, sometimes on mere grounds of tradition, sometimes because a name was wanted as a kind of handle for holding on to some admired work, and sometimes as the mere say-so of a self-

appointed "authority." When the real love of old works of art set in and captured the fancy of a great many people, and when facilities of travel improved, and public picture-galleries began to grow, and loan exhibitions to be held, of course it became inevitable that all these attributions should be tested. Lovers of art, as they grew familiar with the paintings of the Old Masters, became conscious that many a "Raphael" was not painted by Raphael. They also learnt that many a picture to which no name was attached was as fine as, or finer than, others by artists of well-rooted reputations. Thus the hunt began—the hunt after forgotten reputations, and for the purifying of the record of established masters.

In consequence of the persistent labours of some three generations of earnest workers, a great change has been wrought. Pictures have been deprived of false attributions which once masqueraded as the work of greater men. Pictures have been raised from anonymity into the rank of acknowledged masterpieces by famed artists. Finally, forgotten artists of the first rank have been found anew, and equipped with a longer or shorter list of known works now acknowledged to have been painted by them. Simultaneously with this work of connoisseurship, the old archives have been ransacked, dates have been discovered, the trustworthy facts about artists' lives have been revealed, and all manner of interesting information clearly set down, grouped together, and made to yield precious treasures of deduction. This work has called into existence a whole class of investigators—experts, historians, archivists, and the like—and for them the museums and universities of Europe and America have provided a reward of bread and butter in return for their devotion of a lifetime to

research. These men, however, are paid not so much in money as in sport. Theirs is the joy of the hunt. They do not have to await the winter for their quarry. They are hot on the scent all the year round, and never know but that to-morrow may give them some new fact or open their eyes to some unsuspected generalisation which will thrill them with the delight of success in keener form than ever big-game hunters experienced, and will bring them also the envy and admiration of their rivals, and, rarely, even the momentary attention of the great world.

Based on all this activity of research, the whole giant growth of art-dealing has arisen with its huge money rewards, and out of the same impulse has come that vast enterprise of excavation—the most sporting category of all historical sports—which has carried men who at home are fancied to be dry-as-dust antiquarians to places remote and sometimes insecure, where, superintending perhaps hundreds of labourers, talking unknown tongues, and as lawless as the miners of Damsite Gulch, they have delved into the piled heaps of ancient ruin and recovered lost cities, forgotten civilisations, nameless races, and treasures of glorious beauty. Yes, indeed, the hunt is worth while in any of its forms, and the mere fox-hunter, in what he believes to be the greatest moment of his glory, does not begin to know the passionate thrill of delight, almost enough to strike a man dead, which comes, it may be in the still hours of the night, at a moment of discovery to some silent worker in his quiet study.

Whether Foppa was quite, or only almost, forgotten before the days of research I myself forget. I think he was a name and little more. Presently, he began to emerge. Pictures were assigned to him with certainty one after

another, and now he is the subject of a thick and large octavo biography, by Miss Constance Jocelyn Ffoulkes, fully documented, fully illustrated, and accepted as authoritative by those entitled to an opinion. To that book let any reader desirous of accurate detail refer. He will there find dates of birth and other events. He will find a list of his pictures and photographs of them, including the two that will be referred to below. He will find whence his art was derived, and how he lived much longer than used to be supposed, and how, in his old age, he failed in power, and actually painted the bad pictures which kind critics had wanted to ascribe to someone else. For us here, all that we need to note is that from him and his contemporary, Mantegna, the great Renaissance schools of painting in North Italy derived their origin. Those of Venice and the East go back to Mantegna; those of Milan, Brescia, and the West go back to Foppa. His importance, from the historical point of view, is thus obvious. Bevilacqua and Borgognone were his followers, if not both his pupils. Luini, amongst other well-known artists of the next generation, descended from him. Those grey faces I had by now so well learned to recognise re-emerge characteristically in Luini. Borgognone's fascinating angels first appeared on Foppa's panels. Foppa's compositions were repeated and developed long after he had ceased to paint for Lombard patrons.

When, therefore, one day, whilst hot upon the Foppa scent, we stumbled on a Bevilacqua, we felt that success might not, after all, elude us. It came about in this way. There was an old man who sold pictures in a back street in rather a remote quarter of the city, whose shop I had visited late one afternoon. I found in it a picture, apparently

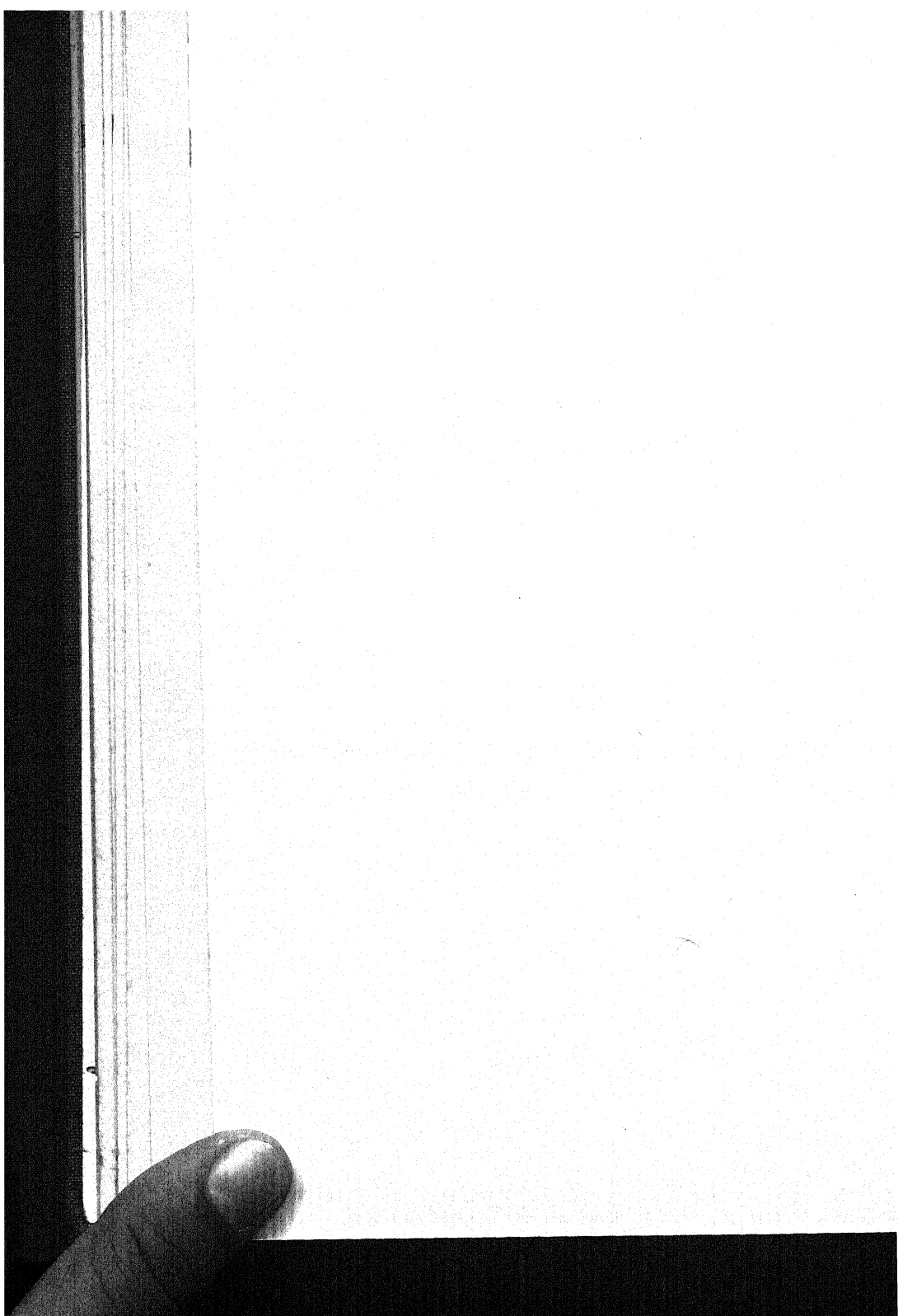
of the Leonardo School, a version of the "Madonna del Lago," which he sent home after me on approval. Daylight revealed it as a modern copy done on an old panel, so I took it back to him. He was disappointed, and well he might be, to see it returned on his hands, as perhaps it had often been returned before, and he was more than usually eager that I should see every picture he possessed, in hopes that he might not fail, after all, to sell me something. He was a queer little old fellow, and wore a black velvet cap, which made him look like a sorcerer out of a Rembrandt. He took us through his various living rooms, and finally up to his bedroom. My wife entered first, and at once saw and recognised the Bevilacqua. I followed and did the like, but we said nothing, and awaited developments. For anyone who knew as well as we did the Brera Bevilacqua there could be no doubt about this one, though people with a general knowledge of the school often mistake it for a Borgognone. Really it comes much closer to Foppa than any picture Borgognone ever painted, and the angels might have been designed by him. I am not going to tell the price we paid for it, nor shall I hereafter reveal our prices generally. Suffice it to say that they were moderate for those days, and, from the point of view of to-day, absurdly small. We, however, thought them quite large enough, and no doubt they gave the vendors a sufficient profit. Thus we carried off our first substantial purchase, and if our home-coming that day lacked the wild enthusiasm with which we had convoyed the Venetian daub, like the Florentines their Rucellai Madonna, we, at all events, enjoyed a solid delight in that we knew what we had got without the shadow of a doubt, knew it to be a sound painting by a definite, if not absolutely first-rate



BEVILACQUA

33 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 24 in.

Facing p. 22



master, and were thus secure against any unforeseen and violent reaction or disappointment.*

That same day, too, I obtained access to the apartment of a dealer who was known as the Widow Arrigoni. She kept her things in two or three lofty salons. For the most part, they were large things, giving to the rooms somewhat of the imposing aspect which every dealer in Italy nowadays knows how to achieve. Great gilt pieces of furniture and other rococo objects curled and twisted and glimmered among dark hangings, and there were several large and, to my thinking, ugly late works, which then had no interest for me. She owned also quantities of splendid old stuffs, and a great deal of china. Much of all this was of fine quality, but not in our line. I was about to go away when she said :—

"I know what you want—a Raphael. I have one, and will now show it to you." Alas, how many "Raphaels" had I even then already been shown; and how many more was I afterward destined to behold! Dealers nowadays, even the most ignorant, know too much to play thus with the great names; but the habit of the eighteenth century still lingered on when I began to collect, and Raphaels, Michelangelos, Titians, and Leonardos were frequently among the pretensions of the smallest dealers. Accordingly, my heart did not flutter when the Raphael was produced, even though it was framed in what is, or then was, known as a "robbery" box. A robbery is a well-made cabinet

* This Bevilacqua Madonna was exhibited at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in 1898, and was noticed as follows: By Dr. G. Pauli (*Zeits. f. b. Kunst*, N.F. x. p. 106), who called attention to resemblances to Bevilacqua's "Adoration" at Dresden, and the Madonna of the Piccinelli Coll. at Bergamo; by Dr. Frizzoni (*Gazette des B.-A.*, 1898, pp. 296, 298); by Dr. W. von Seidlitz (*Repertorium*, xxx., Heft 5).

of blackened wood, closed by shutters or wings, into which the frame fits under glass. The fact that a picture is so carefully enshrined is thought likely to dispose a buyer to regard it instinctively as a thing of special value. The glass prevents him, at least until it is removed, from examining the paint too closely, so that a strong first impression may be produced, and on that foundation a clever salesman can often effect a satisfactory bargain.

This "Raphael," when its doors were opened, proved to be a very obvious Flemish-Milanese picture—one of several known versions of the "Virgin with the Cherries," a composition based upon some Leonardesque design, which was popular with Italianising Flemings in the first half of the sixteenth century. I find in my old diary that I attributed this picture, which I presently purchased, to Bernard van Orley. It was not really by him, but it came out of that entourage. No one has yet fully accounted for the origin and popularity of the type, examples of which can be seen in almost every gallery in Europe to-day. Who first gave it vogue; in what place it obtained fame; where and why it was so often repeated—these are questions to which no answer has yet been given. My example of it was a good one, with an attractive landscape of Flemish type seen through an open window. I soon tired of it, however, and before many years was lucky enough to exchange it and an old Steinway grand piano for a Neri di Bicci Madonna and a new Steinway, neither of which has yet worn out its welcome.

I promised to call on the Widow Arrigoni again, and see some other treasures not just then accessible, but it was twenty years before I fulfilled that promise. I was then spending two or three days in Milan, and had drawn



NERI DI BICCI

21 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 15 in

an absolute blank in all the dealers' shops in the city. I bethought me, by some sudden illumination, of the old lady, and found her name in the directory, though not, I think, any longer as a dealer. Arrived at her door, my summons was answered by a curious-looking domestic, who, in reply to my question whether her mistress was at home, informed me that she was, but that she was, at that very moment, in the act of dying. That, I believe, was the last time when I even hoped to make a purchase from the dealers of Milan. Those I once knew are all dead ; their successors, except one or two of European reputation, have now nothing to sell.

CHAPTER III.

THE FINDING OF A FOPPA

I HEADED each of the preceding chapters in turn, "How I Found a Foppa," and have had to change it, for still the actual adventure eludes my pen; but I vow this time that the story shall be gotten rid of before this third chapter closes, even if I have to stretch it out to a hundred pages. Of course, the simple fact, which might have been told in two lines, is that in Milan I found no Foppa at all. Hunt high, hunt low as I might, starting early and returning late, no Foppa was discoverable because none was in the market then, nor, I believe, has any turned up since in the Lombard capital. My twenty-franc piece was beginning to lie more than lightly in my pocket, and looked like taking flight. But this was not the worst. To my horror, I now discovered that my own domestic prestige was in peril. A bet taken in the presence of one's wife, it seems, has got to be won, or she will be shamed by her husband's humiliation. Perish the thought! Frizzoni had found a Foppa, then why not also I? If there were none in Milan, one must be sought elsewhere. Foppa did not only live in Milan; where else did he live? Brescia? Well, then, off with me by the first train next day to Brescia, and "don't come back without a Foppa"! Here was a pretty kettle of fish! There was no doubt what had

to be done, so off I went next morning by an eight-thirty train to Brescia.

Arrived there, I left my bag at the station, and wandered forth on foot into the town. The apparent hopelessness of my quest came upon me, and I determined to commit my fate to chance. The whole town seemed to resound with the hammering of copper. In the front of one little open workshop after another sat a workman beating out some copper vessel, and behind and around him were piles and heaps of the finished product. Who on earth could want so many copper vessels? I watched the copper workers, and then the people passing me on the pavement. I don't know what I expected to find in their faces. Presently, a kindly looking, intelligent person attracted my attention, and I made bold to address him.

"I want to buy some old pictures," I said. "Can you tell me how to set to work to find them?"

"Certainly," he replied. "Go to the Italia Inn and ask for Luigi. He will be there, or not far off. He makes it his business to know who has pictures to sell, and he takes strangers about and makes his living that way. They call him Luigi dell' Italia."

I thanked the gentleman and took his advice. At the Italia I found Luigi, an energetic and apparently honest person, as such fouts go. He has been dead long years now. I afterward learnt that he had been serviceable to many collectors in his day. Mr. Henry Willett acquired through him that remarkable set of decorative portrait heads from the Castle of San Martino, which are now scattered through various museums—the Victoria and Albert, the New York Metropolitan, and others—whereof more anon.

Luigi at once took me in hand. I was careful not to tell him anything about Foppa, though it would not have mattered if I had told him, for he had never heard of Foppa, nor could he tell the work of one artist from another's. "I will take you first," he said, "to a house full of old pictures. It belongs to Nobile Angelo Mignani. He is an old fellow who paints, and he gives small sums for any old pictures that people bring him. These he is almost always willing to sell."

The house was at no great distance, and we were at once admitted. It was a tall and spacious dwelling, in a rather narrow street. Internally, it was much out of repair, and the great staircase was dark. We found the noble Angelo at home, and delighted with the chance of a bargain. He and Luigi greeted one another as old conspirators, and I felt like a chicken about to be plucked in their hands. They played up to one another, and echoed each other's praises of this and that. The storeys of the house seemed as interminable as those of a skyscraper, but that was because they were so full of things. On the first floor the rooms contained framed pictures, carved chests, heavy furniture, hangings, and church draperies. I wish I had the chance of choosing amongst them now, for then I understood only pictures, and not many styles of them. However, all the pictures I saw were bad. Some worse than others, but none in the least attractive to me. So we went up to the next storey, where things were more dilapidated, frames incomplete, panels cracked, canvases torn. The pictures down below had all been fairly complete, and were, at least, gay with bright and often new colours. Noble Angelo now told me that he had restored them himself, while these pictures were wait-

ing their turn. He took them as he felt inclined. I believe him to have been the worst restorer that ever lived. He painted on an old altar-piece as a child paints in a pattern-book, using only three or four shrill colours, and laying them on thickly within uncertain outlines.

Higher up, we came to rooms filled with broken altar-pieces, unframed panels, and piles of canvases. They stood in rows, leaning against one another, twenty or thirty deep. I worked steadily through them hour after hour, and all were bad. Thus in some almost abandoned house in Belgravia, perhaps, in the twenty-third century, the sweepings of the rejected pictures of nineteenth-century Academy exhibitions may drift together, still begging for a purchaser, and a collector may turn the wrecks over and wonder how such pictures came to be painted, and, even more, by what mischance they have survived. With less and less hope, I mounted higher and higher, and we all became dejected—they, because nothing they showed could tempt me to buy, and I because I found no Foppa nor any even moderately desirable picture.

At long last we reached the very highest attic, and in it a room called the studio, into which we climbed by a ladder. Here it was that the noble Angelo did his work of refreshment to the wrecks that came into his hands. As the door opened, I saw the floor wholly heaped up with panel pictures over all the area displayed. But yonder, what was that? My heart almost ceased to beat. There at the far end, leaning against the wall, with a number of smaller predella panels leaning against it, I beheld the top half of a small Madonna picture, and the face of the Virgin was the face of a Foppa and no other. I said nothing. I hardly dared to look that way; in fact, I turned my back

on the disgraced treasure and began examining a village altar-piece mounted on a large easel, and in the process of undergoing final destruction at Mignani's hands. It had never been anything but a third-rate work, and evil had been the days through which it had passed ; but the candles that had fallen against and burnt it had not left such abominable traces as those of noble Angelo's brush. Far other was his opinion, as he pointed out his work with pride. I had to say that the picture was too big for me. Then he began on the predella panels. There must have been a hundred of them on the floor, poor, wretched things, dishonoured in their making, their life, and their fate. He saw it was no use, and evidently did not think the Foppa Madonna likely to be any more attractive to me than the rest. So we looked out of the window and admired the really wonderful view over the roofs of the town and away to the foothills of the Alps. The sun was shining ; the noise of distant copper beating, wafted by a soft breeze, mingled with the hum of the nearer streets. "Well," I said, "I must be going ; but I want something by which to remember this visit. How much do you ask for that Madonna there against the wall?" He named a moderate price, and I accepted it. The thing was wrapped up in an old newspaper. Luigi hitched it under his arm, and noble Angelo conducted us down the ladder and all the dark stairs, and so out into the street. "I will now go and lunch," I said, "but first show me the way to the telegraph office." It was not far off. "I have bought the Foppa," I wired. What happened during the remainder of the day I do not remember. But that night a mysterious thing occurred, for which I have never been able to account, except upon the assumption that some evil spirit was

enraged with me and wanted to pay me out for having outwitted him in the matter of the Foppa.

In my bedroom in the hotel there were some hooks fastened in the underside of a beam, and so placed that clothes suspended from them hung clear out away from any wall. Even if you were to have swung them to and fro, they would not have reached any wall or come in contact with any other solid object short of the ceiling. Before going to bed, I wound up my watch, and then put it into the pocket of my waistcoat hanging upon one of the said hooks. I carefully locked the door of my room, jumped into bed, and, with pleasant thoughts of the Foppa and a triumphant home-going, was soon sound asleep. Bright sunlight awoke me early next morning, and I leapt out of bed. Reaching up for my watch to know the time, my fingers encountered broken glass in the pocket. This was surprising to begin with, but it was much more surprising to find, not merely the glass, but the dial of the watch broken, and presently to realise that the works also were smashed—smashed as though the whole thing had been pounded in a mortar with a heavy iron pestle. In that way the devil tried to get even with me. But I was glad that he had selected the watch instead of the picture on which to wreak his rage. One would have thought that if he had been angry about the picture he would have smashed it; but he didn't. I have always wondered why.

Of course, I was back in Milan double-quick, with the old panel under my arm and glory on my head. The very next morning we called on Dr. Frizzoni, who rejoiced with us, and took us immediately to Morelli. There was, of course, no shadow of a doubt about the Foppa, for all its plastering with repaints. The face was untouched, and it

told its story beyond possibility of mistake. So there were congratulations all round, and much discussion as to the relation of the new picture to others already known. But the one obvious necessity was to have the thing cleaned and its real surface and nature exposed. This meant that it had to be taken, and forthwith, to our good friend, then and ever since, Professor Luigi Cavenaghi, than whom no better physician for old Italian paintings has ever lived. Even in those days, he had accumulated an unrivalled experience, and possessed unexampled skill in this difficult art; whilst since then an almost countless number of the greatest masterpieces in the world have passed through his hands.

All four of us accordingly made a rendezvous for the next day in Cavenaghi's studio, and duly kept it. The Foppa was placed on an easel and work at once began. Our hearts were in our throats with unutterable excitement, because it was still possible, nay, almost probable, that under the repaints we might find irreparable damage. Off from the child's head came his golden curls, and a red cap took their place. Other no less remarkable changes followed. The most extraordinary was with the landscape. Four successive landscapes there were, one on the top of another. Three came off without resistance, and disclosed the original beneath in perfect preservation. One wonders what kind of mania possessed people to deal thus with a picture. In this case, not an inch of the panel, except the Virgin's face, had escaped some botcher's hand, yet for all this over-painting there was no excuse. The picture underneath was in sound condition, except for one or two small injuries in unimportant places, each of them no larger than a threepenny piece. Foppa's own paint

was as hard as enamel, and was quite unaffected by the solvents that swept away the later disfigurements. But when all of them had vanished that could be dissolved, there still remained on the Virgin's hood some very ancient and unnecessary repainting, which Professor Cavenaghi skilfully chipped off with the sharp edge of a knife gently tapped like a chisel. The sight of work so skilfully done was a joy to see. These last hard and opaque layers came away like the peelings of an onion, and finally the original painting was before us, almost as fresh as when it left the hand of the fifteenth-century artist. The crown of our satisfaction was thus complete, and we hugged ourselves with joy.*

This, however, was not the end of our adventures with Foppa. Having found one picture by him after these exciting adventures and repeated disappointments, another fell into my hands like a mere gift from the gods a few days later. Brescia, of course, was to us, after this, a place of golden delight; so we went there again very soon to spend a few days, during which time I made a careful study of the pictures of my period in the gallery, besides having further adventures with Luigi, then and in later years, of which more anon. I was particularly struck by a little picture of the Crucifixion by Foppa, which seemed then to me, and still remains, one of the most pathetic representations of that subject ever painted. With that well in my memory, it was impossible for me to fail in recognising a similar work by the same master if it happened to come my way.

A few days later I was in Bergamo, now more than ever

* This picture is now in the well-known collection of my friend, Mr. J. G. Johnson, of Philadelphia.

on the hunt. Everyone who has been there will remember the rope railway by which one ascends to the upper town. I cannot now recall by what chance I was led that morning. It was, I know, the first jubilee day of Queen Victoria, and it brought me uncommon luck. The rope-train's upper terminus is in the ground floor of a house that commands a wonderful view over the Lombard Plain, then steaming and glimmering in mid-day splendour. Some luck took me further into that same house. I mounted its stone staircase to an upper floor and knocked at the door of an artist, who not only painted pictures, but added to his income by dealing in Old Masters. I bought an unimportant picture from him by way of setting the ball rolling, and then he recommended me to visit the schoolmaster Gabezzeni, whom I had much difficulty in finding. The innkeeper in the house where once Colleoni lived helped me to run him to earth, but not till he had tried to sell me some frescoed portraits of the Colleoni family still remaining on the walls of one of the rooms. I told him he ought to be ashamed of himself, and went off in dudgeon. The little schoolmaster had all the arts of a fisherman, and treated me as though I were a shy trout, to whom he offered his pictures like various flies. He would not approach the question of price till I had seen all his store, and he thought he had formed some idea of which I liked best. Of course, I correspondingly tried to mystify him, and so we played the game for an hour or two, both thoroughly enjoying ourselves. A number of neighbours formed, alternately, audience and chorus, and prevented the altercation from dropping or growing dull.

I was reminded of my friend Moberley Bell's story about the Cairo carpet-seller. A certain Anglo-Egyptian

official saw and coveted a carpet in his shop. He inquired the price. "Thirty pounds," said the dealer. "Nonsense," said the official; "I'll give you fifteen." The dealer tried to bargain, and suggested twenty-eight pounds, but the official stuck to his price and went his way. Next day he looked in again, offered his fifteen pounds, was refused, and went away. The process was repeated at intervals for some time, and always with the same result. One day the official saw this same carpet on the floor of a friend's room. "Hullo," he said, "you bought that carpet at Abdullah's! How much did you pay for it?" "Twelve pounds" was the reply.

"Twelve pounds! Why, I've offered him fifteen pounds over and over again, and he always refused. How did you manage to get it for twelve?" Off went the disgusted official to Abdullah and complained.

"You've sold for twelve pounds to Colonel — the carpet which you have always refused to sell to me for fifteen. Why did you do that?"

"Sir," said he, "you came to my shop and asked the price of the carpet, and I told you thirty pounds. You said fifteen, which was all right so far; and then I said twenty-eight. It was then your turn to raise your offer a little, and we should have talked together, and I would have sent out for coffee, and we would have bargained together in a kindly fashion, and by degrees, you going up a little and I coming down a good deal, we should have come to terms, and you would have bought the carpet. But you always rushed into my shop and said, 'I'll give you fifteen pounds,' and off you went. In that fashion, I would not have sold you the carpet till the end of my days. But what did Colonel — do? He came to my shop and asked the

price of the carpet, and I said 'Thirty pounds.' He in turn offered me five pounds. But he came in and sat down and we talked and bargained together, and by degrees, he raising his offers and I lowering my price, we came together, and I sold him the carpet for twelve pounds, which I would not sell to you for fifteen. To buy and sell as you would do may be all right for your people, but it is not our way. You had better go to the European stores if you want to buy like that."

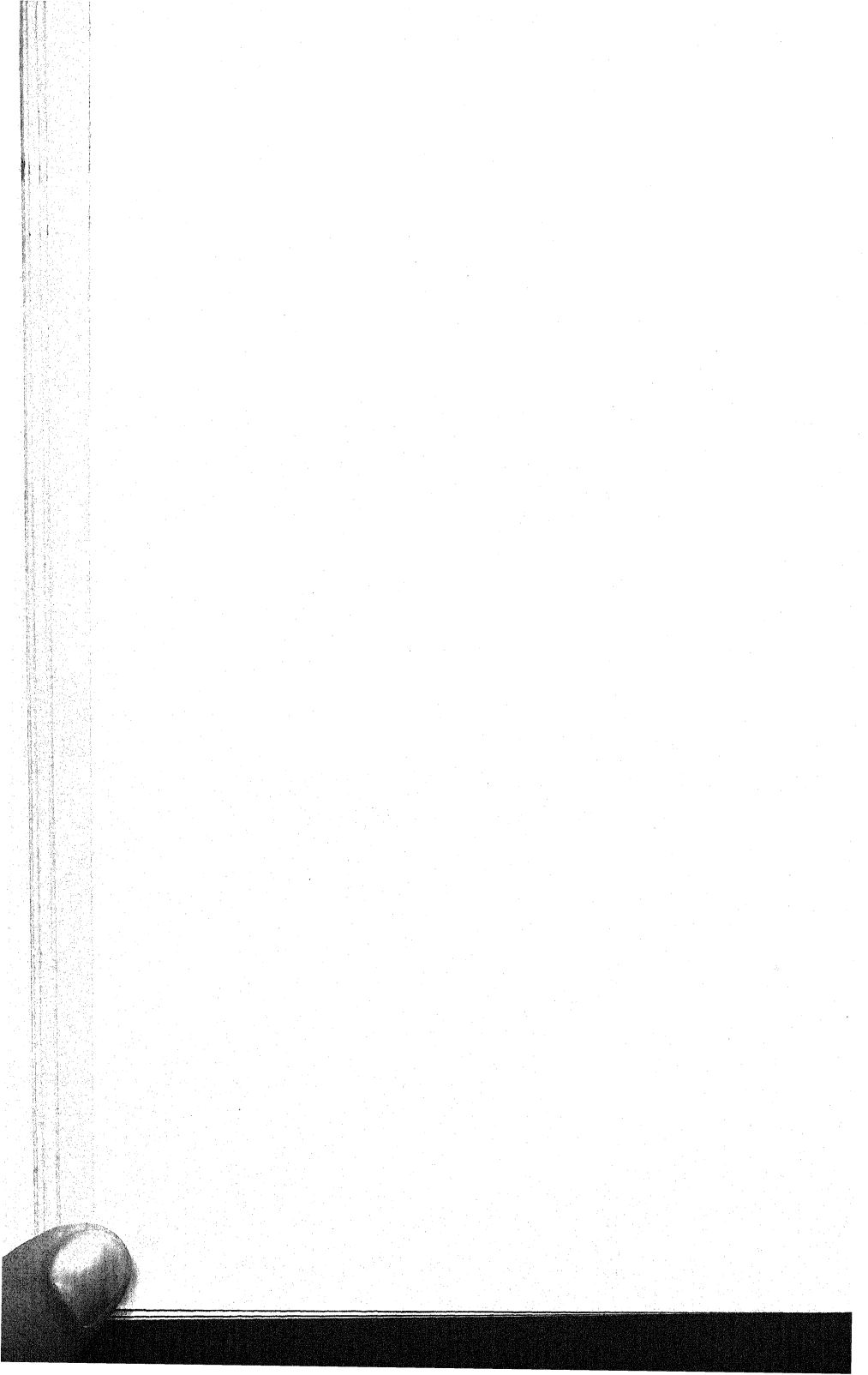
The Italian dealers at the time I am writing of retained, and in out-of-the-way places they still retain, something of this Oriental attitude of mind. Buying and selling to them is not a mere matter of exchange of a thing against money; it is a pleasant way of spending time and an opportunity for cultivating conversation. A bargain is not so much a matter of science as of art, in which each party has to display his human qualities, and not merely effect a deal, but obtain some insight into the character and quality of the other. Thus the schoolmaster and I wrestled together for an hour or two. I forget what the pictures were that he had for sale. One, I know, was a rather large canvas painted by Moroni, which had been partly burned in a church fire. The fragment remaining had been cut into pieces, with a single figure or mere head on each, and I began by buying a cherub for a few francs as a sort of *entrée*. The real *pièce de resistance* was the Foppa, which finally passed into my possession, and was duly removed to Milan when I returned there on the following day.

The picture represents a half-figure of the dead Christ, as it were, standing in the tomb, with the cross and other instruments of the Passion behind. It probably once



FOPPA
20×15½ in.

Facing p. 36



formed the top panel of a composite altar-piece, and perhaps the other dismembered panels are scattered in different museums. The Christ is of astonishing dignity and beauty, and the whole treatment of the subject, which is emblematic of the flesh and blood of the Eucharist, is very fine. The delicate light and shade of it, throwing the head into high relief and dissembling the accessories as merely decorative adjuncts, which do not attract the eye, but only serve to frame the figure, is unobtrusively clever in a high degree. The Brescia Virgin and Child was a brighter and more attractive picture, a decorative rendering of a traditional group. The Bergamo C. C. is an imaginative work of high originality, the like of which Foppa seldom if ever again produced.

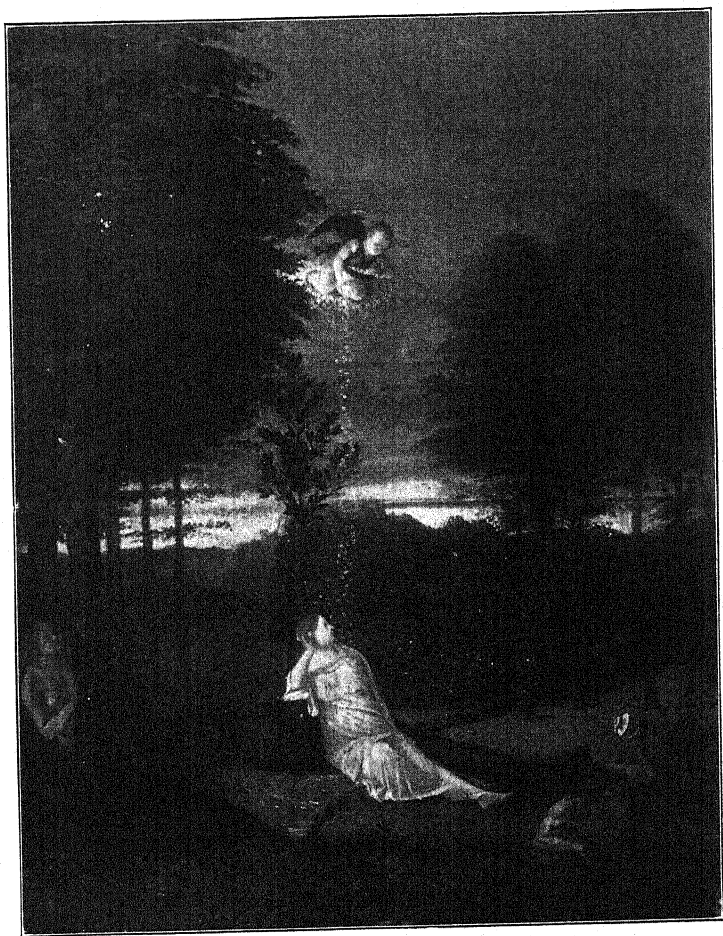
* Both the Foppas were exhibited at the Burlington Fine Arts Club Exhibition in 1898. They were discussed in the same articles as those cited above (p. 23, footnote) for the Bevilacqua. Dr. Pauli attributed the Christ to Foppa's early period, little later than the Bergamo "Crucifixion." Sir Claude Phillips described the Christ as "noble and reposeful in sentiment." Miss C. J. Ffoulkes and R. Maiocchi in their book ("Vincenzo Foppa of Brescia," London, 1909, pp. 87-90) assign the Christ to about 1460-1470. They continue as follows: "The owner of this picture and Morelli (who saw it when it was first acquired) considered it to be not much later than the Crucifixion of 1456. The drawing of the cranium certainly recalls that of the central figure in the picture at Bergamo, and the hands, in form, come very near to the hands of the Trivulzio and Berenson Madonnas. The expression of the head is significant and touching, though the type is unusually soft and gentle. The outline is still rigid and primitive, but the modelling of the body is remarkably good for so early a date, and in this particular it is interesting to compare the drawing of the form with the figure in the three versions of the St. Sebastian, with the Dead Christ in the Pietà of the Berlin Gallery, and with that of the Bernacoin collection, all works of much later date. Innumerable examples of this subject are met with in every branch of art, from the fourteenth century onwards; and among panel paintings this picture may have been the prototype of a vast number of works of the school, many of which are still existing in North Italy and in Liguria."

CHAPTER IV.

MORE FINDS IN MILAN

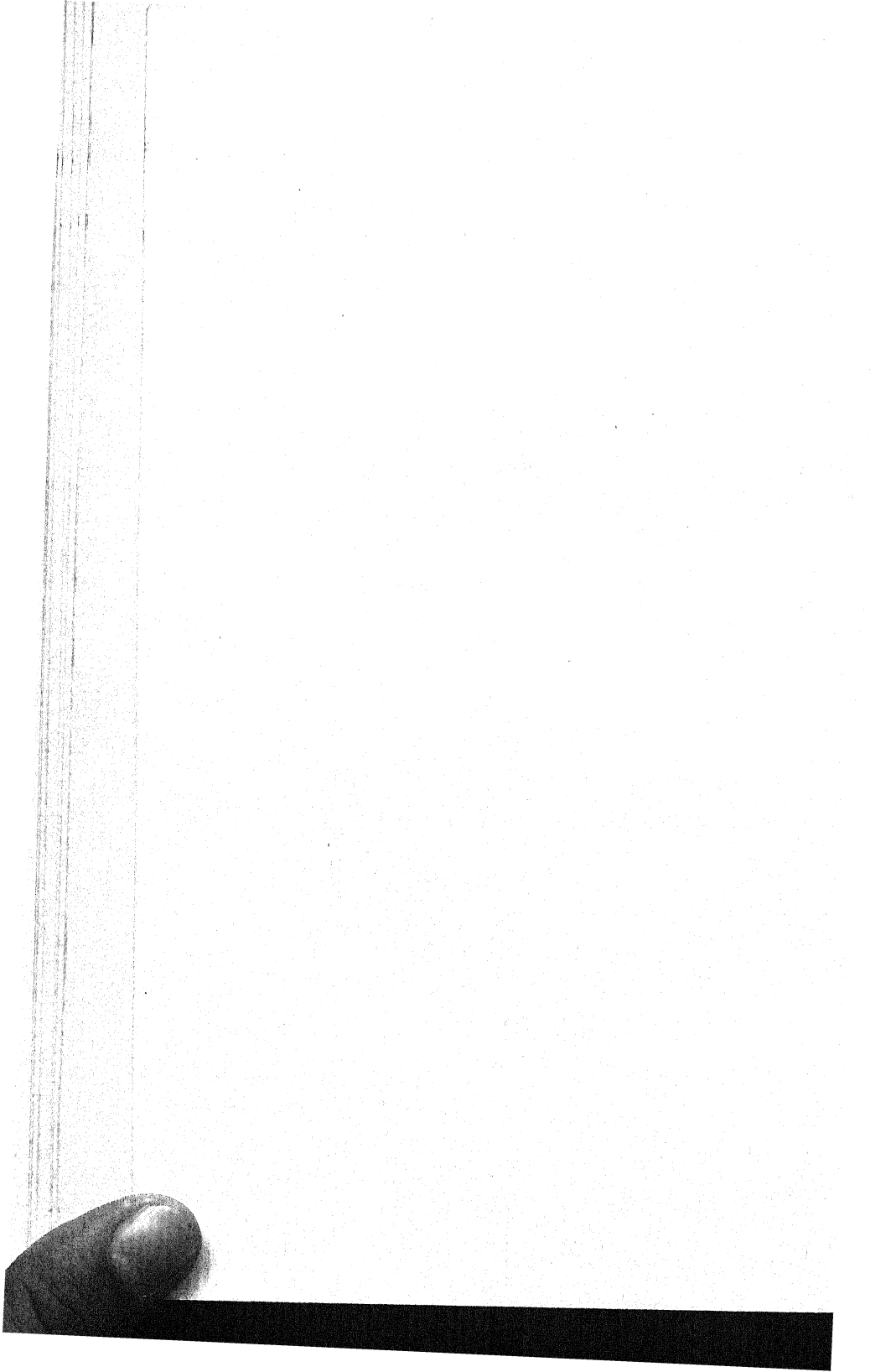
THUS I can now say with thankfulness, Foppa is at last finally swept out of the way, and my narrative can proceed, though not strictly on chronological lines; for the necessities of the case have already carried it beyond the points of occurrence of several incidents which must find place somewhere within the covers of this little book. There is, for instance, the story of the Lotto, which certainly ought to have been told before this; but it simply would not come in, and had to be bundled aside to await its chance. I had better set it down here, and at once, before I am switched away on some other unforeseen track.

It was the very day we were going to Cavenaghi's studio, with the first Foppa under my arm, that I stumbled across the Lotto. I simply walked into an upstairs shop that I had not before noticed, and there it was on the table, the very first thing I saw. Lotto at that time was outside the rather narrow range of my connoisseurship, so I cannot say that I recognised the picture for what it was. But I at least knew that it was not by Rottenhammer, as the dealer tentatively suggested. Rottenhammer was a favourite name with ignorant dealers then for any smooth-surfaced picture with a landscape background that obviously could not be called Raphael, or Titian, or Correggio, or by some other



LOTTO
7½ × 13

Facing p. 38



of the few great names they knew; but I never could find out what it was that induced them to pitch on that seventeenth-century German's name rather than any other. This dealer, at any rate, had his doubts, and admitted that the picture on the easel might be by some other artist; but it was beyond his wits to attain any certainty in the matter. All I could surely assert, in the state of my knowledge then, was that there was Venice at the heart of the work, and more particularly Giorgione; beyond that, I only knew that here was something of a finer excellence than any picture we had yet had a chance to buy. And now a curious thing happened. With the opportunity of our lives before us, and only a small price demanded, I simply could not decide to walk off with the picture. My wife entreated; the man offered to take less; it was all no use, and I departed from the shop and left it behind.

But with the night came sanity, and on our way to Cavenaghi's studio next day we stopped and just picked up the treasure. The dealer, for luck, threw in a majolica alberello, probably worth as much since as what we paid for both. He also told us that the picture had formerly been in the Castelbarco collection. We tied it up with the Foppa, which we were taking to be cleaned, and by a curious coincidence the two panels were of exactly the same dimensions, only differing in thickness. Arriving at Cavenaghi's, where, as above told, we met Morelli and Frizzoni, I was able to spring a surprise on them, for my packet only seemed to contain the Foppa, and, when that had been dealt with, the second panel seemed to arrive by magic. It was easy to see how astonished and pleased they were when I offered it to them. I could not follow what they said to one another at first, but only their swiftly

reached conclusion. "It is his; it is certainly his." Then I had to expose my own ignorance, and demand to whom it was they so confidently ascribed it, and they replied, "Lotto." "But," I said to Morelli, "I noticed that at first you seemed to have some other artist in your mind; who was that?" He replied that, for a moment, it almost seemed to him that it might be by Giorgione, but only for a moment. It was certainly painted by Lotto in his early Giorgionesque days, about the time when he painted the St. Jerome in the Louvre, which has a similar beautiful landscape background. Since then Lotto has been the subject of a masterly study by Mr. Berenson, in which our picture is carefully analysed.* But he makes the same mistake that we did in calling it at first "Danaë," with whom the subject has really nothing to do. Under Cavenaghi's skilful hands the small repaints, clumsily added to cover up a single injury in an unimportant position, were soon removed, and in due season the damage was perfectly repaired.

As I have questioned the correctness of the name used by both Morelli and Berenson, a brief discussion of the actual subject of the picture cannot be avoided. In the centre there lies a little white-robed maiden, and something is, indeed, being poured into her lap from the sky; but it is a baby Cupid, not Jupiter, who does the pouring, and the shower consists, not of gold, but of flowers. Jupiter

* B. Berenson, "Lorenzo Lotto," London, 1895, p. 1. He says that the girl's face recalls that of the Virgin in Alvise Vivarini's Madonna in the Redentore at Venice. He cites also other resemblances to Alvise and to Jacopo de' Barbari. In recent years, however, Mr. Berenson has altered his attitude towards Alvise, and he might now be less inclined to assign to him so much influence in the formation of Lotto's style. See also Morelli's "Italian Painters," Vol. II., London, 1893, pp. 46, 51.

pouring gold into Danaë's lap is a wholly different subject from a Cupid pouring flowers into the lap of this very pure and simple girl, who seems as far removed as possible from the kind of person that would sell herself for money, even if a god gave it. The meaning of the subject is indicated by the presence in the foreground, on either side, of a female satyr of the woods and a god of the fountain. These are the genii of the fair landscape, in the midst of which the maiden lies day-dreaming at the foot of a laurel. There are trees and hills behind; a sunset sky, ruddy below, deep blue above, fills the rest of the panel. The maiden is dreaming of love as a vision of flowers falling upon her. Probably the artist was moved by some poem of the day, not yet identified, or perhaps the subject was given to him by a patron.

It was only during a very brief period in the childhood of the Renaissance that such a picture could have been painted at all. Its naïve charm was impossible to the more sophisticated artists of a few years later, whilst a little earlier the old religious spirit still retained too much potency for this pure paganism to be possible. Save for Giorgione, Lotto could not have painted thus. The very naïveté of the picture doubtless seemed to its own maker a defect, which he was soon after able to avoid. Every great school of art passing through its various inevitable stages, from uncouth and tentative beginnings to culmination of flower, exuberance of fruit, and final decay, does, at some moment of its youth, produce works of extraordinary charm and naïveté. Venetian artists passed through this phase about the years 1490 to 1510. The Florentines passed through it a trifle earlier. Albertinelli exemplified it in his "Adam and Eve" at Agram. Fra Bartolomeo

would have produced perfect examples of it had he been less pious. Perugino's "Apollo and Marsyas" in the Louvre, Raphael's "Knight's Dream," the National Gallery "Amor and Castitas" (now given to Cosimo Roselli), are all delightful products of this attractive phase of the early Renaissance. The same spirit lingered on later in Carpaccio, and occasionally re-emerged in other Venetians; but it was soon lost in the greater powers and mightier conceptions of the culminating artists, who yet, in the full triumph of their unrivalled maturities, never again attained the particular charm which in no picture is more visibly incorporated than in this "Maiden's Dream"—the name by which I have chosen to call it.

I was then too young and immature to imagine that perhaps Morelli might feel a little sore at such a stroke of luck coming to so callow a collector as I was. I had bought it, evidently for little money, under his very shadow. He might well think that fortune was unkind not to have given it to him. But it seemed to me then the most natural thing in the world that he and our admirable friend, Dr. Frizzoni, should have patted me on the back and rejoiced with me, and made us feel that our pleasure was no less theirs. Yet such magnanimity is of the rarest, and just then in my presence was manifest that real nobility of character which Morelli carried through life, and which gave him not merely the respect of scholars and critics, but the admiration, and even the affection, of a wider circle.

He bade me have the picture well photographed, as he would have occasion to need it, and it has always been one of the minor enduring regrets of my life that I failed him in this matter. When the picture arrived in England I did have a photograph of it made, but it turned out poorly. A

year or two later Dr. Frizzoni wrote to me: "Ella conoscerà il primo vol. della nuova opera di Morelli (Gall. Borghese e Doria). Ora egli lavora assiduamente al secondo nel quale tratterà del Lotto in particolare. M'incarica quindi di chiederle s' Ella potesse procurargli una buona fotografia della sua Danaë que servirebbe per la riproduzione nel volume stesso come punto di partenza per l'artista." I sent him the bad photograph, but it would not reproduce, and, the picture being in Liverpool and I in Egypt, or some such place, a better was not procurable in time for his publication.

Since then the picture, like the Foppas and others above-mentioned, has often been exhibited, and is well known to all who study the art of its land and period. It has, no doubt, given much pleasure to others, but no one has had the chance to feel in its presence what we have felt, on whom it burst so unexpectedly, and to whom it was the key that unlocked a whole school and phase of the greatest pictorial art of Europe and the world.

When the picture was exhibited in 1905—I believe at the Burlington Fine Arts Club*—the following notice of it appeared in the *Athenæum* (December 2nd, 1905) by a writer whose style will be readily recognised:—

"No one has ever doubted that Sir Martin Conway's so-called Danaë is not only the earliest existing work by Lotto, but also in many ways the most entirely enjoyable of all his paintings. For Lotto was an artist of exquisite sensibility if imperfect talent, and, in consequence, he promised more than he could ever perform. Here, in this early work, which breathes the fine earnestness and illusion of

* Or perhaps in the Venetian Exhibition at the New Gallery, where it also appeared.

youth, he is really greater in what he suggests than in the imperfect accomplishment of his maturity."

It has entertained me to recount thus at length these early adventures of ours in the field of Italian picture collecting, and I hope the reader has been able to follow me so far without weariness. Evidently, however, I must not trespass too far on his patience, being, as I am, completely in his power, and able to be switched off in a moment by the mere closing of the pages, as one switches off a needless electric lamp. The remaining acquisitions of this extraordinary six weeks of good luck can only be recorded in brief fashion. In all, as far as I remember, we took home some thirty pictures, most of minor importance, which I afterward sent to the sale-room, and have regretted ever since. But besides the two Foppas, the Lotto, and the Bevilacqua above described, four other pictures by Romanino, Tiepolo, Cotignola, and of the school of Moretto, cannot go unrecorded.

The Romanino came out of a private house at Brescia, in which were quite a number of attractive pictures, amongst them a Moretto Visitation, which I have since seen in some public gallery. Our picture is a Virgin and Child with the little St. John, not beautiful in form, but agreeable in colour. It possesses something of Venetian warmth, but the peculiar red of the Virgin's robe is Romanino's own, and so is the dark slaty-blue of the cloak, whilst the plain architectural background of marble is obviously Brescian. There can be little doubt that Romanino's pupil, Francesco Prato of Caravaggio, had a hand in this work, as in several other of the same artist's pictures, notably the large painting in the National Gallery.

A full-length life-size St. Peter, leaning on a stone



ROMANINO

19 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Facing p. 44

pedestal or balustrade, with his chin resting on his hand, manifests unmistakably the design of Moretto; the drapery is his, and so is the chord of colour and the rather smoky blue sky and rounded cumulus clouds. This canvas formed part of the wall decoration of a chamber or chapel belonging to the Fenaroli family at Brescia, which was supplied by Moretto. Of course, most of the actual painting must have been done by assistants. There were also figures of Paul, Jerome, Solomon, and John the Evangelist, but the Peter was far the best, and I think that the master himself had some hand in the actual painting. The series is mentioned by Crowe and Cavalcaselle, who do not seem to have been informed of their original purpose.*

At this time, but I forget whether in Brescia or Bergamo, I also acquired a good example of Tiepolo—one of those small, upright canvases which seem to bear designs for vast wall-paintings. I remember to have been attracted by a distant vision of it in some corner of a shop, owing to its likeness to one of the two pictures which I had seen Sir Frederick Burton purchase for the National Gallery at the Beckett-Denison sale at Christie's two years before. It appeared to me to be one of the same series, the figures being grouped under the similar enframing arch of an open portico. Over their heads is a boy angel casually swooping about in the air, and being at the moment upside down, but entirely comfortable and enjoying himself. The meaning of the picture is clear enough. St. Peter is seen enthroned on a high pedestal, like St. Augustine in the National Gallery picture. He is stretching out his key toward Faith, a blue-robed, white-winged lady-angel

* German edition, Vol. VI., 1876, p. 480.

standing before him. In front is the swarthy and masculine figure of Paganism, fallen off the globe of the world and lying prone, with his overthrown incense altar and books beside him. The whole is painted with the dextrous fluency characteristic of the eighteenth-century Venetians, and especially of Tiepolo, and is in perfect preservation.

Last to be mentioned, though of earlier date, is a small but very beautiful little panel picture by that rare painter of the Romagna, Francesco Zaganelli, of Cotignola, by whom there are pictures in the Brera, and at Naples, Ravenna, Berlin, Chantilly, and Dublin, as well as an important altar-piece in the collection of Mr. David Erskine. Mine is a small half-length of St. Catherine, painted with great smoothness of finish. The influence of Perugino is evident in the design, but all the critics agree in the attribution to Cotignola, which, besides, is rendered certain by the appearance of the same model in the same costume on one of his altar-pieces in the Brera. In his large pictures the composition often seems to lack unity, the figures being put together rather like the parts of a puzzle, but his individual figures are often expressive and beautiful. He appears to have been fond of upturned eyes, and he painted the eyeball very full and round, as, for instance, in the Berlin Annunciation. There is a delicate drawing by him at Stockholm, which was a study for the small Madonna at Chantilly. He designed with facility and grace decorative details, such as foliated friezes or pilaster panels. The little St. Catherine shows him at his best. He is evidently happier and more at home in work on a small scale, like a Flemish painter. He could linger lovingly over details and find scope for his decorative predilections in the crown, the embroidered borders, the angel clasp, the little pearls and



MORETTO

65 × 38½ in.

Facing p. 46

tassels, and the ring, all of which he finished with scrupulous care, so that a magnifying glass is required to manifest their completeness. My wife at once annexed this picture of her patron saint as specially her own, and none has better kept its place.

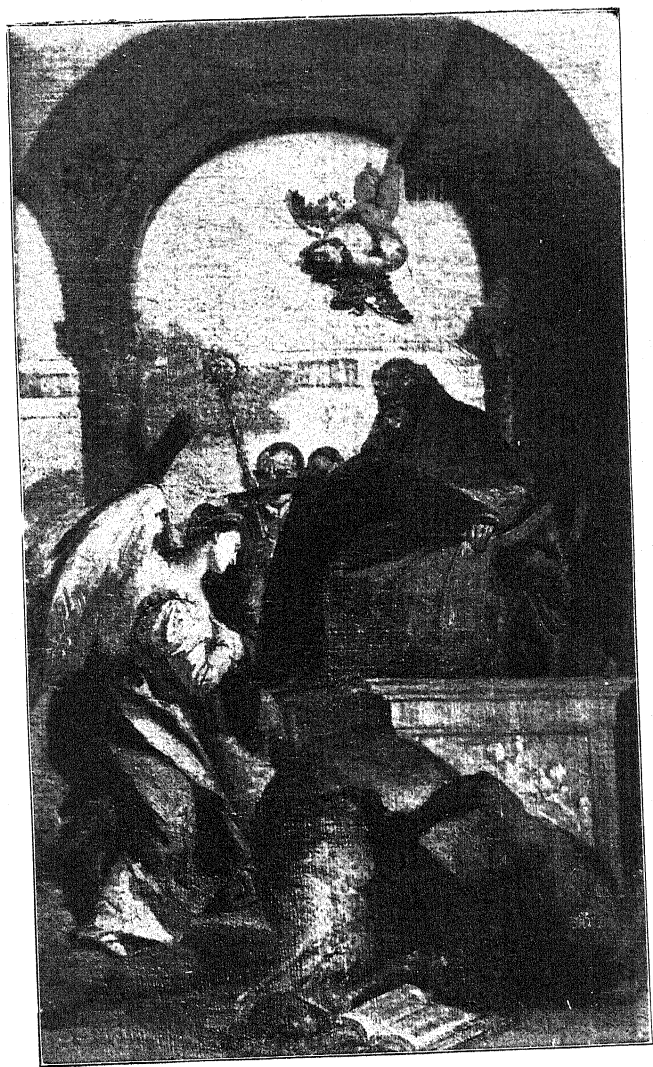
Nowadays, after such a streak of luck as we had in that early summer at Milan, I should know better than to quit the field unless overwhelming necessity compelled. But the world then contained other wonders no less, perhaps even more, enthralling to me than works of art. These were snow mountains. The climbing season was at hand, and the call of the glaciers inexorable. So we packed up our spoils, shipped them off to England, and by July 9th I was on the arête of the Nadelhorn, suffering horrible pains from lack of condition, but rejoicing in the glory of a world where there are no dealers and nothing to hunt, save new routes up peaks or over passes.

CHAPTER V.

HERE AND THERE IN ITALY

A FEW years passed before another opportunity came for devoting any considerable time to the hunt for works of art in Italy. I had been enjoying an unusually successful mountaineering season, which was suddenly terminated by storms and snowfalls of exceptional ferocity. All the high peaks became inaccessible, and climbers were driven away home in crowds before their appointed dates. I spent a week walking up hills in the neighbourhood of the Italian Lakes, and it was while seated on the summit of one of them that a sudden and irresistible desire came upon me to turn my back on the snow-laden Alps, and take up again in the cities of North Italy the old hunt which had been so successful in 1887.

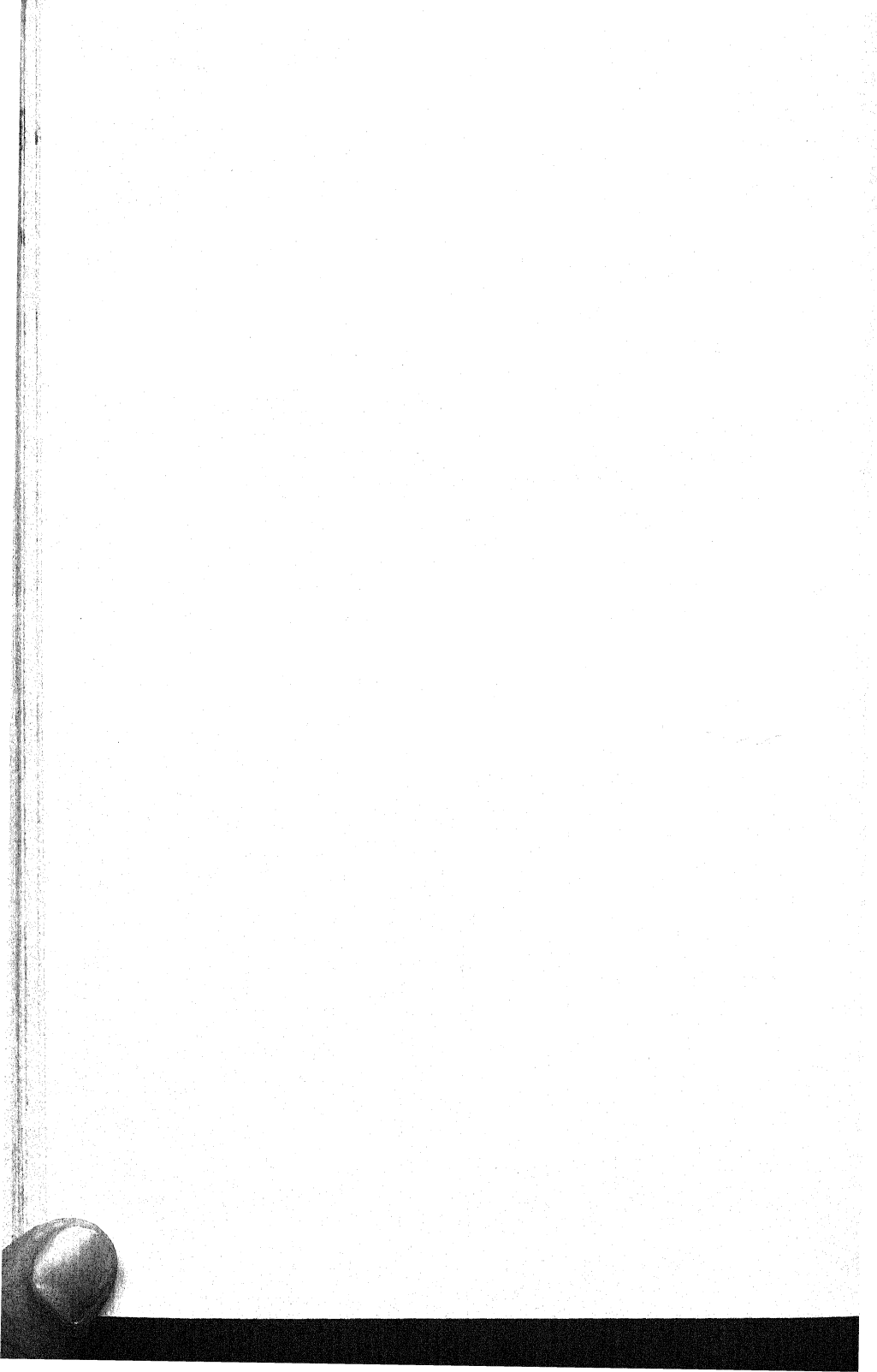
I had observed that the great dealers in London, Paris, and elsewhere obtained much of their stock from smaller but still important dealers who were themselves, respectively, the most important in such cities as Milan, Venice, Florence, and the like. These dealers in turn gathered what they had for sale by going the rounds of the yet smaller men, beneath whom again were the scouts who visited the villages and attended the country sales. As at each step up this scale prices were at least doubled, it was evident that whoso would buy cheap must go as near the fountain-head as possible. My former campaign had been



TIEPOLO

24 × 14 in.

Facing p. 48



amongst the smaller dealers, but it occurred to me that if I pursued my search into the villages themselves I might be yet more fortunate. It was a pretty plan, but there were a good many villages and country villas in Italy, and it had not occurred to me that to ransack them would be work for several lifetimes, rather than for a few autumnal weeks, which were all I had to spare.

There was, however, a district famed for its beauty which I had long wished to visit. It was actually at my feet on the hill where I was at the moment sitting when my determination was formed. It was the Brianza—that region of chaotic little hills and lakes, with villas and villages patched about, which lies between Como and Lecco, and stretches out somewhat southward, having been shaped and fashioned out of the terminal moraines of the vast Alpine glaciers of the Ice Age, reaching out at their furthest toward the great Lombard Plain. I decided to traverse this region on foot, combining the enjoyment of its beautiful landscapes with a hunt for works of art in its villages, farmhouses, and villas. I started early one morning a few days later from Bellaggio, with Burton's story of his journey to Mecca in one pocket, and some light provisions in another. How well I still remember the beauty of the way as I mounted along the backbone of the ridge dividing the two arms of Como Lake, with a fine disregard of roads and even footpaths, and no kind of idea whither I was going or what I was going to do.

Presently I passed over a col, and began the descent of the Val Assina. I lunched by the roadside near a village, and instituted casual enquiries as to whether anyone about had any old things to sell. It soon became apparent that everything not new was alike "*antica*" in these parts.

Before long I thought I was hot on the scent of something really precious; exactly what it was I could not learn. It was to be very beautiful, very old, I gathered, and I should find it in that farm away off up a long hillside on which the sun was shining hotly. I toiled exceedingly in the ascent, and arrived gasping at the door. My enquiries elicited an immediate response. I was taken into a room, and the thing proved to be a much damaged spinet of London make! It was not exactly what I had expected, and I went on my way rather crestfallen. I need not describe other the like adventures and disappointments in detail. One day was as little fruitful as another. I pursued false scents and found nothing; or what I found was absurdly different from what I wanted.

The hunt, however, was very amusing. There was talk with all sorts and conditions of men and women—farmers, priests, road-menders, labourers, carriers, and what not. I slept in curious places; the scenery everywhere was lovely. Most beautiful of all was an evening spent at Erba, where I dined on a terrace commanding a most glorious view over all the Brianza, flooded with the blue shadows that drown it at sunset, when the hilltops are golden and all the sky aflame.

At last, however, I met with a very intelligent person, who seemed to understand exactly what I was after. "Would you like to find an old sculptured figure?" he asked, "because I think I can tell you where to look for one which is really very precious and beautiful. It belongs to some people at the village of Barni, whom you will easily find if you care to walk there."

I had been at Barni and found nothing, but then, no doubt, I had missed these people. I did not want to go

back on a wild-geese chase; so I made very careful enquiries. "What kind of a figure was it?" I enquired. "Male or female? And how big?"

"Oh, it was the figure of a man about one metre high and finely made. It was very old, very, very old; as old as the figures you can see all over the Cathedral at Milan, and as fine as any of them."

"Was it a marble figure," I asked, "or one of commoner stone, or, perhaps, terra-cotta?"

"It was surely marble, very beautiful marble, and there was some colour on it, but not much. Perhaps it was once coloured all over, but now there is only colour on some parts—the hair, I think, and, perhaps, the clothes, but that I don't rightly remember."

"How did the owners of it get it? Did it come from a church or did it belong to their house?"

"I don't know how they got it. I only know that they and their forefathers have owned it as long as anyone remembers. People have wanted to buy it, but they would not part with it. But now the old man is dead, and the children sell it so as to divide the price between them."

Accordingly I set off and walked back to the village of Barni, and the people sought were soon found. Yes! They had a beautiful figure for sale, very old, and sculptured in stone, a thing of great value. Sad were they to have to part with it, but there was no help for it. People had offered good prices for it, but not what it was worth, and I might have it if I paid what they were asking.

Could I see the figure? Alas, no! It was no longer in their house. Up till yesterday it had been, but then they had sent it away to their relative at Bellaggio. He was a

20287

man of influence and position, sacristan and bell-ringer at the parish church there. He would have no difficulty in getting a good price for it from the foreign visitors there. Perhaps he had already sold it.

This talk took place beside a fountain where the water gushed out from a pipe protruding from a roughly carved sandstone head intended to represent Victor Emmanuel—a type of fountain-head common in these parts. The evening was coming on, and the shadows were creeping down the hills; the water plashed musically into the great stone trough where the village girls had been washing their linen, which was now spread to dry. By this time I was fairly determined to run the elusive sculpture to earth, so I decided, without hesitation, to go back to Bellaggio, and hunt up the “man of influence and position.”

It was the following day before I reached Bellaggio Church and enquired for the sacristan. He was not forthcoming. He had gone away for the day on business of importance. My heart sank within me. What other business could he have but to dispose of the statue? Did they know whether he had a statue to sell, or whether he had taken it away with him? Oh, yes, he had a statue to sell, a fine old statue! It was brought to him from the country only the day before. But he had not taken it away with him. He had caused it to be carried up into a chamber in the church tower, and there he had locked it in. When he went away he took the key with him, and till he returned no one could enter. But he would be back to-morrow and then I could see it. Till to-morrow I should have to wait. I asked what the statue was like, but no one could describe it. All they knew was that it was very old, very beautiful, and very precious, worth perhaps hun-

dreds of francs. If I chose to wait I should see it, and could judge for myself.

Next day I was early on hand in a regular fever of impatience, which I did my best to hide. The sacristan was forthcoming, and the key. We entered the tower and mounted what seemed interminable steps. The old fellow was very garrulous, and full of praise of his treasure, but I paid little attention to him, as in a moment I should be able to see for myself. We came to the door of the bell-chamber, and the lock would not open. The key was tried one way and another. Much kicking and banging followed. They were just going to send for a locksmith when the door gave way, and we entered a pitch-dark place. I could dimly discern something standing upright in the far corner. As I was making my way toward it, the shutters opened, and a burst of sunlight illumined the vast moustache of another figure of Victor Emmanuel, if anything worse than the fountain-head of Barni! "Is this your wonderful statue?" I cried. "Certainly, that is it. Is it not beautiful? It is very, very old!" That was the end of my attempts to go behind the little dealers and discover Old Masters for myself in North Italian villages.

With much humility I made my way by boat over to Cadenabbia, and comforted myself by purchasing on the quay a quantity of excellent wrought-iron work, and a delightful sculptured and painted wooden group of St. Anne with the Virgin and Child, by an Augsburg artist, all for 150 francs. The iron candelabra would be worth more than that now. The dealer had a ton or so of good old wrought-iron strewn about him, but it seemed then so common that it was impossible to believe how soon such stuff would become difficult to find, and I had little use

for it. The train carried me off to Brescia, and into the arms of Luigi Felisina once more. Whither he led me I no longer remember, save that we paid an early visit to Nobile Mignani. By some obscure route word had reached him that the picture he formerly sold me was a good one, and that he might have asked for it a larger price than I had paid. In consequence, all his prices had gone up to absurd figures, but as he had nothing I would have carried away if he had given it to me, this was not of any consequence. One thing was evident enough, however, all over Brescia, the general run of prices for everything old had everywhere increased. There were no more ten-franc Old Masters, however bad. Still, I was able to make one or two acquisitions, and to see interesting works which were on sale, but beyond my range. There was a whole collection of paintings, some of them valuable, in the Casa Carlini, and I greatly coveted a brilliant fragment of Romanino fresco which they would only part with if I purchased also some more costly work.

After one or two more false starts, Luigi took me to a studio where, to my astonishment, I saw what looked like three of the finest heads from Mr. Henry Willett's series of decorative portraits, and indeed it immediately appeared that they actually did belong to the same series.* They were originally painted as a frieze, and used to decorate a room in the Gonzaga Castle of San Martino di Gusnaja between Mantua and Brescia. The panels purchased by Mr. Willett were forty-four in number, and they "formed a frieze on two opposite walls, and on each side of the deep

* Eighteen of them were published in the *Burlington Magazine*, of November, 1905, of which nine are in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, and nine in the Victoria and Albert Museum. See also "Portfolio," 1884, p. 35.



BRAMANTINO

17½ × 18 in.

Facing p. 54

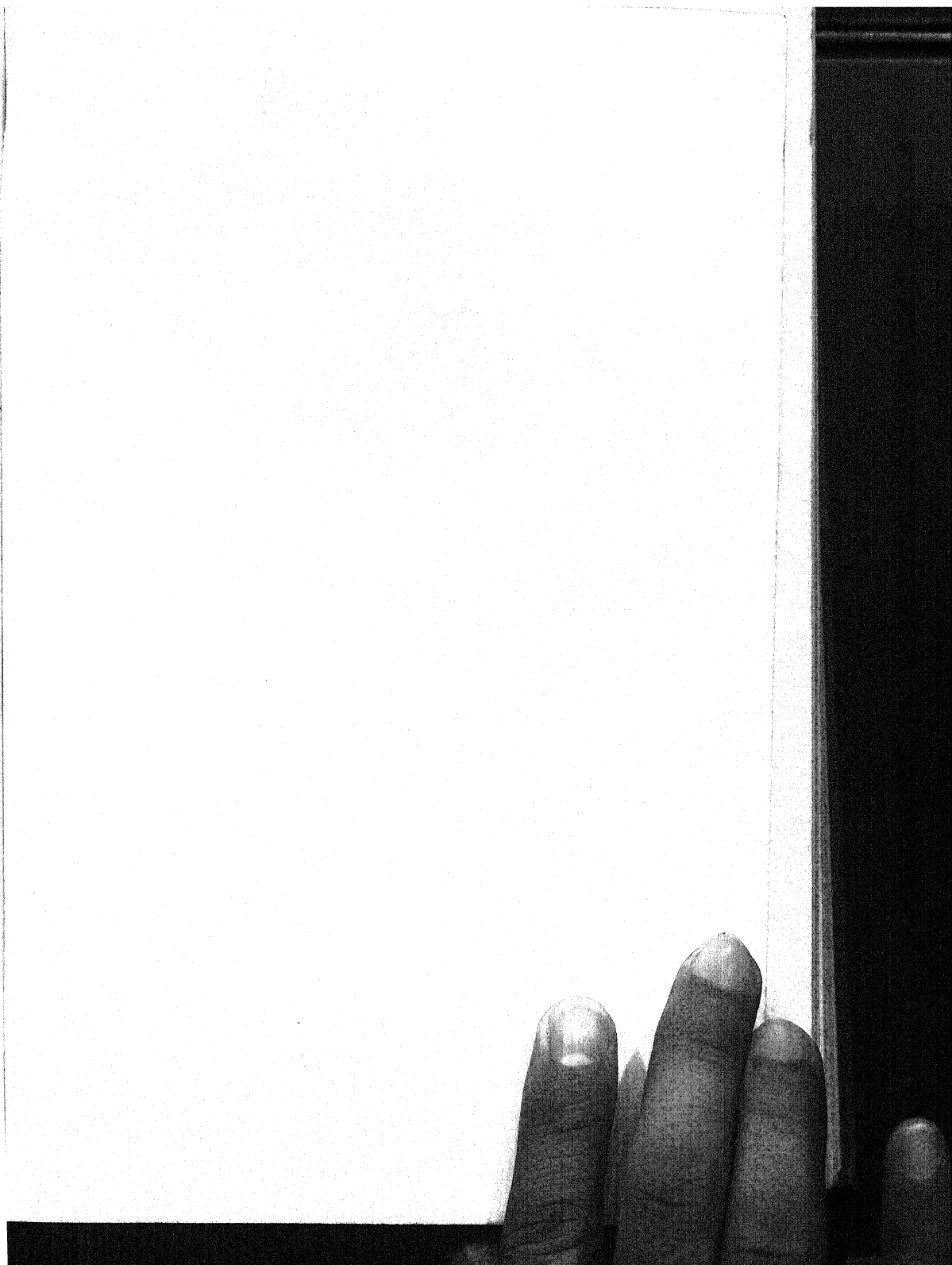
beam which cuts across the centre of the room parallel with the other panels." All these "were entirely concealed by the numerous coats of paint applied over them by successive tenants of the building." It was only by an accident that the existence of paintings in that position was discovered. The panels were taken down, and Mr. Willett had the enterprise to buy them uncleaned, with nothing but a little paint showing through here and there. They were skilfully cleaned by Prof. Church, and immediately attracted much attention. Again, to quote Mr. A. J. Koop, writing in the *Burlington Magazine*, "By common consent the painter to whom the portraits are, ultimately at least, assigned is Bramantino." The whole series was evidently designed and the best heads painted by a first-rate master influenced by Foppa, but several of the panels betray the hand of assistants.

It was supposed that the forty-four thus found completed the set, but two or three years later it was noticed that there were some more panels, whose existence had not been suspected, at the principal end of the room, I believe over a fireplace. Three panels were thus added to the series, and one of these proved to be in faultless preservation, and I had the luck to capture it. The other two required considerable repainting, and ultimately went, I believe, to Germany. Mr. Koop is in error in supposing that my panel was one of the original forty-four; neither was he aware of the other two. The total number now existing is forty-seven, and they are widely scattered. Mine occupied the central position at the most important end of the room, and appears to me, and to others who carefully studied the rest when they were all together, to be the best of the whole set.

"Mr. P. G. Konody," continues Mr. Koop in the article referred to, "has recently put forward* an ingenious theory, which, if proved true, would greatly enhance the value of these paintings, at any rate, in the eyes of those to whom a great name, attached with more or less justification to an art object, is a fetish. It is to the effect that, though owing their origin to a set of paintings in *fresco* by Bramantino, our panels are not by his hand, but are the actual copies mentioned by Vasari† (in the Life of Piero della Francesca) as having been prepared just before the destruction of the original pictures. These copies, says Vasari, were made for Raphael by one of his pupils "to the end that he might possess the likeness of the persons represented; for these were all great personages." Curiously enough, these original portraits, which are thus *en passant* referred to in Vasari's Life of Piero della Francesca, are completely ignored by the author in his short but comprehensive sketch of Bramantino, while of the copies, which after Raphael's death were presented by his heir, Giulio Romano, to Paolo Giovio, no further trace has hitherto been found. Now, seeing that Giovio stood for many years in the position of friend and adviser to that insatiable art collector, Isabella d'Este, what more probable than that the copies were transferred to the Duchess's collection, and are in actual fact these very panels from the Gonzaga Castle? The probability is further strengthened, as Mr. Konody points out, by the absence of any Gonzaga portrait among the series, and by the fact that these are in tempera on wood, as might be expected in copies from what were doubtless frescoes. . . . Whatever conclusion may be finally

* *New York Herald*, Paris edition, Aug. 28th, 1905.

† *Vite*, ed. Milanese, II., p. 492.





SOLARIO

22 × 17 in.

Facing p. 57

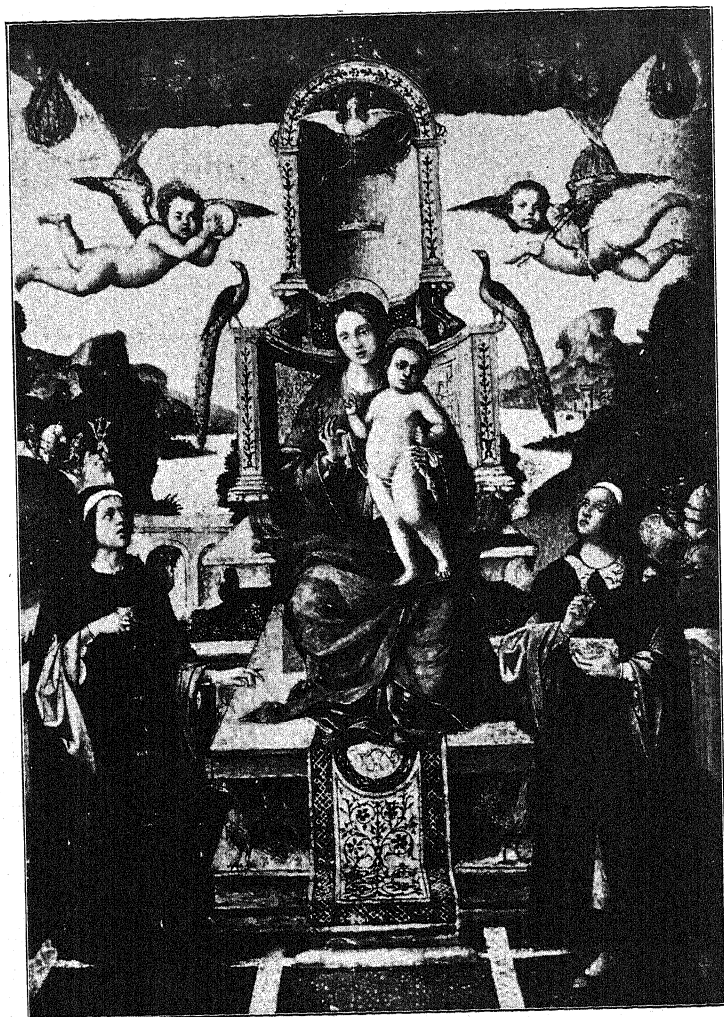
arrived at as regards the artist responsible for the portraits, or the persons represented, all will agree as to the super-excellent merits of the paintings *per se*. Such grace and refinement, such delicately restrained characterisation, are found only in the great masters of the period."

It presently appeared, after we had left the studio with the newly acquired picture, that Luigi had kept what he considered to be his *bonne bouche* till the last. This proved to be a panel painting of "Christ Crowned with Thorns," by Solario—a picture brilliant in colour, and perfect in preservation, besides being an important example of a rather rare artist. I would, of course, have preferred to drop upon a portrait by him, but hunters cannot often be choosers; they have to follow whatever scent they happen to strike, hoping always that it may lead them to some record trophy. The subject of my picture was painted by Solario more than once. There is the well-known and highly finished example in the Poldi Pezzoli collection at Milan, an early work, in which, as likewise in his landscape backgrounds, he comes closer to the effect aimed at by fifteenth-century Flemish artists than he does in his later pictures. The central figure from my picture was several times repeated, either by the artist himself or in his studio. Such repetitions are in the Lützschen Gallery, and in the collection of Mr. J. G. Johnson at Philadelphia. Another example was for sale in London about 1891. Besides these there are versions in the Crespi Gallery at Milan, and one without arms in the Bergamo Gallery. A good copy was sold in the de Somzée sale, and there is one signed by Simon de Chalons, and dated 1543 in the Borghese Gallery.

Our picture had a wretched gaudy frame, but fate was keeping a real beauty in reserve for it. We only found

that, however, a good many years later, when motoring about in France. It happened that we stopped for a night in Avignon. Though the hour was late and twilight already coming on, I plunged into the dark recesses of an antiquity shop, kept by a merry old lady, who followed me about with a candle. I was not long in noticing the frame, and its excellent carving. A rococo addition had been fixed on the top, and a mirror had replaced the picture it originally contained. I said, "That will just fit our Solario." It was a lucky guess, because, when we had brought it home we found it to fit with the most perfect accuracy. In the same shop was one of those large leather-covered, brass-nail-studded, round-topped trunks, so popular with wealthy travellers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. We had recently been at Grignan, and had mentioned our visit to the old lady. "Then you must certainly buy Madame de Sevigné's trunk," said she, and buy it we did; not that I have any reason to suppose that it had anything to do with Madame de Sevigné, beyond existing in her lifetime, but because it was a fine example of its kind, in good condition, and the nail-heads are arranged in a pretty pattern of lilies and stars.

Here will, perhaps, be the best place to include a very beautiful little panel which I picked up at Lausanne one year on my way back to England from the Alps. It has often been exhibited, and has caused the critics more than enough trouble, whilst no two of them, so far as I know, have yet agreed upon a name for the painter of it. Venturi assigned it to Gian Francesco de Maineri, painter and miniaturist of Parma. Others have suggested some unknown Romagna artist in the neighbourhood of Cotignola. To me (though no one agrees with me) it seems the kind



Painter unrecognised

$13\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{4}$ in.

Facing p. 59

of work that Lorenzo Costa might have painted in his youth. Whoever the artist may have been, he certainly produced a very charming little picture, in which I can find no trace of the feeling of a miniaturist, but rather of a man who designed as though he were accustomed to paint large altar-pieces with life-size figures. The Virgin is seated on an elevated and elaborate marble throne, sculptured and inlaid, the kind of throne beloved by Ferrarese and Bologna painters. The child stands erect upon her knee. A beautiful carpet with a gold ground is under her feet, the kind of carpet that would make a sensation in a New York auction-room if it could now be forthcoming; but the like of it, I believe, nowhere exists. On either hand in front stands one of the brother physician saints, Cosmas and Damian, in rich red robes. There is a fine dais overhead, and a pair of floating cherubs, and in the lacustrine landscape background, before queer-shaped hills, are St. Eustace and the magic stag on one side, and St. George overcoming the dragon on the other. Nor must I forget to mention the two peacocks that stand on the shoulders of the Virgin's throne. The composition retains much of the architectural symmetry of an earlier day, and combines it with the reserve and plain good faith of those religious painters of the fifteenth century, whom their religion served and fitted as his armour a knight. But there is superadded to all this a charm of colour, a grace of design, and a sense of decoration which endow the whole with a singular power to please, so that almost everyone that looks at it takes pleasure in it, whether they already possess a liking for Old Masters or not.

And yet, when we look at this picture, there is a drop of bitter in our cup of sweetness; for along with it in the

same house there hung a small profile portrait of a man, painted, as I then believed, by the same artist. It was really a charming little panel, and we wanted it sorely. We thought, however, that we were extravagant in buying the Madonna, and contented ourselves with that, feeling comfortably virtuous in the sense of abnegation wherewith we left the other. It was a foolish and costly economy, because the portrait would be invaluable now, not merely as a precious thing in itself, but as throwing light on the authorship of both. I have never been able to discover what happened to it. It has not found its way into any collection known to me, nor has it appeared in the sale-room. Perhaps it still lingers unregarded in some Lausanne house. When it reappears, it will be far too costly for us to buy. Five hundred francs was all they then asked for it. Alas, for the neglected opportunities of the old days!

CHAPTER VI.

THE HUNT IN EGYPT

IF nowhere but in Italy were any hunting-ground for old works of art it would be joy enough, had the supply of desirable finds not run so short. The world, however, is wide, and a catholic collector has ground for hope everywhere. Best of all ancient countries a quarter of a century ago was Egypt. That was before its soil had been so methodically ransacked by expeditions of all nations, and before the fellaheen had been brought to understand that they excavated at their peril. Of course, the sebak diggers and poachers will always be making finds so long as there are any old mounds to dig into; but the days when a royal tomb of the eighteenth dynasty could be discovered and secretly looted for a series of seasons are fortunately gone for ever. Science gains if the amateur collector loses, and the attainment of accurate knowledge of the past is incomparably more important than any other consideration, even to the most inveterate of collectors himself.

Now that shiploads of luxurious tourists annually hasten to Egypt to escape a Northern winter, and find amusement in the ordinary round of entertainments which is provided everywhere on the same pattern for modern wealthy idlers, a good deal of the glamour of the East has departed from Cairo. Yet even now some may escape a sense of that loss, by not having been born too soon.

Who that has revelled in the "Arabian Nights" in his childhood can fail to feel a thrill at his first contact with the old romantic world of Islam? I have not seen Cairo since that first visit, and I do not hunger to go there now. The Cairo that I remember was still distinctly reminiscent of the old great days. Its streets were peopled as with the ancient folk. It was a city of camels and donkeys, of bright costumes and loud shouting. "Oah shemaluk! Oah yeminuk! Yallah! yallah!"*—the very words call up still fresh memories of its thronged highways, the hurry of men and beasts, and the glamour of dust made golden by the sun. When Islam is, if ever, harnessed into the shafts of the modern industrial world, and all its hands are fettered to machinery, the last great pool of romance will be drained and "common day" will reign the whole world round. The first evening in Cairo, the first distant view of the pyramids, now at last actually beheld, the first plunge into the bazaars, the almost incredible emotion that came with the first cup of coffee from a native stall—these are some of the unforgettable treasures, possessions for ever that go to build up what for each of us is the real thing that he calls his life.

Someone must have quickly marked me down as a greedy collector, seeing me, I suppose, grubbing in the bazaars and following me home, for, late in one of the first evenings after our arrival, I was told that two natives were enquiring for me. They entered my room like conspirators, bringing an air of mystery with them. After seeming to assure themselves that they were not overlooked, one of them drew a small packet from his bosom and placed in my hands a

* "To the right! To the left! Get on!" Heaven and the professors of Arabic know how these words should be spelt. I merely put down the memory of their sound, having no accessible expert to set me right.

most beautiful little manuscript of the Koran. It was fifteenth-century work, still in its original binding, and I think they intended me to believe that it had been stolen, as was probably the fact. It was the first time I had had dealings with an Oriental. Would that that lost opportunity might return! but such a chance will never again be mine.

"What will you give us for this?" they demanded. "We must sell it quickly, and you can have it cheap."

I bade them name their price, but they hung back.

"Tell us what you will pay; it is worth much more money than we can wait to get. Buy it from us, and you shall have it cheap."

"No!" I replied. "I can't be buyer and seller too. Name your price, and if I can afford it I will buy. But I am sure this thing is too expensive for me."

"A price, a price!" they cried. "Name a price that you will pay, and let us see."

But I would not, thinking that they would only laugh if I did; so at last they suggested eighty pounds.

"That is truly very cheap," I said, "and the book is worth much more; but I have not eighty pounds to spare, as I want to buy ancient Egyptian things, so you must find another purchaser."

"We will take less. Tell us what you will pay. Name any sum."

But I foolishly would not. Five pounds was in the back of my mind, and I was ashamed to utter the words. I refused to deal, and sent them away still urging, and finally whining out the words, "Name a price; name any price, however small." If I had said five pounds, I now know that they would have jumped at the money, and that wonderful book would have been mine; but through shame-

facedness at a first contact with these new folk I lost a golden opportunity.

An old-time Damascus dealer once gave to a friend of mine the following simple explanation as to how he came to sell to him for two pounds an object for which he had begun by asking a hundred. "These things," he said, "are worth to us—nothing. To you they are worth various sums of money. How are we to know what they are worth to you? The price you will pay seems to us to depend, not on the things, but on the persons who buy them. You say this thing is worth two pounds to you. It might be worth two hundred to someone else. How are we to tell what it will fetch except by trying?" That was the happy-go-lucky method of the good old days.

A few days later, returning on the back of a great white hired ass, "Lily Tantry" by name, I was rapidly passing the little stall of a working tailor. He was an aged and hairy man, and he sat on a divan that filled the front of his cupboard-like shop. A curious little chest in the shadow behind him caught my eye, so that as soon as I could arrest the ass I returned and entered into conversation with him.

"What is that chest behind you, O Father of Beards?" I asked.

"In the name of Allah! it is a chest that belonged to my father, on whom is peace, and to his father before him, how far back I know not. I keep my threads and needles in it, but it is old and crazy. If you want it, and will give me wherewith to buy a new and better one, you shall have it, and your donkey-boy can now carry it away."

Said and done it all was in a few moments, and we parted, both rejoicing; only the donkey-boy grieved, but he had not very far to carry it. We were presently jammed

in the confusion of a wedding procession, and I noticed that the box gave rise to some comment, as it was recognised by the neighbours, who seemed to be congratulating the tailor on having disposed of his old rubbish to an infidel, doubtless at a high price. The box still stands on my writing-table, and holds the tools of my craft—pens, pencils, and the like—instead of the tailor's. I have never seen another at all like it, nor have I any idea of its age. It is a solid construction of brown-toned wood, inlaid with black wood, bone, and mother-of-pearl, and with bone colonettes at the angles. Whatever its age may be, the decoration preserves a very ancient tradition, the front presenting the form of an arcading of four round arches, roughly resembling the façade of a Sassanian palace. On the top is a rosette between two formalised trees, and the back is similar. The workmanship is very rough, but highly effective, and the whole possesses an admirably decorative quality.

Besides this box we only bought stuffs and carpets in Cairo, and the buying of Oriental carpets is the same all the world over, or, at least, all over the Eastern world. Nothing is more entertaining. You are seated beside an empty floor, drinking coffee and smoking cigarettes, while carpet after carpet is unrolled or unfolded and strewn around; they gradually fill the whole place and pile up one upon another, while the eye becomes stimulated and finally satiated with the glory of colour, and one's own little heap of acquisitions slowly piles up. I have sought for carpets in Cairo and Smyrna, in Beyrut and Lahore, in Srinagar and Armritsur. I have had them unladen from the backs of great Bactrian camels newly arrived at Peshawar from Merv and Penjdeh. I have bargained for

them with dealers in camp in Ladakh, on the Yarkand road, carrying them down into India from Kashgar, Khotan, and yet further East. I have even purchased from a Central Asian pilgrim *en route* for Mecca the carpet on which he had just been saying his evening prayer. They are all things of romance. They seem to have come, as it were, on the wings of the morning from the land of dreams. Fairy fingers have woven them in a world of colour and happiness, where nothing is done by rule or law, but the whim of the moment alone is guide, and whatever is done is right, because right feeling has willed it so.

The rubbish heaps of old Cairo in those days were strewn all over with broken fragments of pots and tiles. These blue and green pieces with their glazed surfaces glittered in the sunlight amid the sand like bright stars. A few alert persons had already begun to pay attention to them, and were wont to go out a-hunting, especially after rain, in search for rare fragments of fine quality. Some very valuable collections were thus made which found their way ultimately into museums, and gave useful indications as to the place and time of manufacture of certain well-known types of fabric. The hunt was quite exciting, and I went forth to essay it, but where experienced local collectors only cared to pick up specimens of decorated ware, any coloured fragment was good enough for me. I took with me a spare donkey and a sack, and brought home a small load at a time, thus ultimately securing two or three hundredweight of fragments of all kinds and sizes, predominantly blue in colour, but of varying intensities. The sacks returned with me to England, and remained unused for twenty years, but at last an opportunity arrived for their very effective employment. It was when I was

engaged in the repair of Allington Castle for rehabilitation. There was a niche in a wall in one of the rooms. It had once been a window, but was closed in the thirteenth century. I lined this niche with a mosaic made of the blue Cairo pot-fragments, and fixed a fifteenth-century Flemish statue on a pedestal in the midst. The effect is agreeable, and I do not think that future inhabitants of the house will want to undo it. The remainder of my pot-fragments were similarly employed in other suitable positions, so that they were finally used up to the last square inch, and my labours so long before spent are receiving their ultimate reward.

But the months of that winter in Cairo were not mainly devoted to the great hunt. That was a time of terribly hard work, with all the old mosques to be carefully studied in their chronological order, the museums to be learned by heart, and in the evening the mysteries of hieroglyphics to be laboriously penetrated and the lore of the ancient Egyptians acquired. At last the day came when we were able to go on board our dahabiyeh and sail away southwards before a favouring breeze. The noise of Cairo, the throng of its streets, the crying and the going of the folk within it—all faded and vanished as we sailed away. A great silence descended upon us with the oncoming of the night, and all the striving and hurrying of recent weeks seemed suddenly to have belonged to another world and another life. The night silences of the Nile are as wonderful as Alpine silences. Yet, though at first it seems as if sound itself were dead, the listening ear by degrees begins to apprehend a fainter category of subdued voices. Distant sakiehs buzz like far-off swarming bees, an owl hoots, the dogs of some remote village break forth into

barking, and are answered by those of another, yet more faint, in a further distance. Then the tiny echoes of these sounds are perceived coming from the steep face of the river-bank, so that presently what seemed the stillness of death is found to be alive with all manner of little tinklings and soft sighs, gentle ripplings of water, and faint rustling of the reeds.

Our progress up the river against unfavourable breezes, and unaided by steam, was almost incredibly slow. It took thirty-seven days to reach the First Cataract. But the slower we went the better we were pleased, and the longer I was able to spend on shore at sites, some of little fame, but to me of great interest. Every day brought some grist to the mill—some new site examined, some temple or tomb visited, some ancient object acquired. As to these acquisitions, there is, for the most part, little to tell. Things were offered for sale on all sides and by all kinds of persons; some were genuine, many were forgeries, most were of little or no interest—damaged scarabs, broken figurines, imperfect pots, bits of inscribed stone. Sometimes we would sail past an individual standing on the bank of the river loudly shouting and waving some object in his hand, for which he desired rather than hoped to find a purchaser. Once it happened that the wind entirely failed us as we were close in near such an individual. He was seated on the bank, surrounded by ancient pots. They were of many shapes and of more than one fabric, and he had no doubt recently dug them up from tombs at the edge of the neighbouring desert, for it was near Kasr-es-Saiyâd. One of these tombs must have belonged to a pre-dynastic Egyptian, for several of the pots were of the same type as those afterward discovered in pre-dynastic cemeteries which a few

years later were revealed to the world by the excavations of Flinders Petrie. Others were of the eighteenth dynasty. I carried off a crate full of them—things of little value, notwithstanding their great antiquity, but to me ever since a source of continual pleasure, because of their fine simplicity of form and good proportions. Nothing decorates a library better than a row of such pots high up on the top of bookcases. In late years thousands of these common pots have been smashed to pieces by excavators, who had no use for more than a small proportion of those they brought to light in ancient burial-places. The picture of that black-robed Egyptian seated so patiently, apparently miles away from anyone, on the bare river-bank, with his ring of pots around him, awaiting the chance (that by a miracle came to him) of someone in a boat stopping just there, still lingers clearly in my memory—a characteristic image of the East putting its trust in Fate, and not in vain.

The first at all memorable adventure of acquisition that came to me on the Nile happened in the desert near Beni-Hasan, on the way to the narrow valley in the side of which is carved out the shrine called by Herodotus the *Speos Artemidos*. The sacred animal of that temple and of the surrounding district was the cat. It is claimed for man that one of his greatest triumphs is the domestication of that wildest of wild animals, the cat. The claim is monstrous; it was the cat that domesticated man. Some wise old tabby discovered the trick. She told her young, "Don't run away from him; sit still and lick yourself, and treat him with confidence, always keeping an eye on him, though you seem to be looking the other way. He's a blundering creature, anyhow. What he throws never hits, and you have always time to jump aside and get out of his way when

he comes for you. But if you treat him with confidence and purr when he touches you, he'll do you no harm, and when he is not looking you can eat his food and save the trouble of hunting. Have you not claws and teeth? Use them when finally necessary, and he'll be careful. But, on the whole, trust him, though with discretion, and he'll let you live on him." The policy was entirely successful. Man, being tamed, came to think that he had tamed the cat, and was correspondingly proud of himself. The cat never undeceived him, and has lived a life of luxurious ease ever since.

In Egypt the cat was worshipped. In early days it began by being the totem of some ancient Egyptian clan. Other clans venerated the bull, the crocodile, the hawk, the jackal, the cobra, the lizard, and so forth. Observation of existing totem tribes in Africa, Australia, and elsewhere shows us that one or more representatives of the totem are often fed or even kept alive in captivity by the tribe. Thus Mr. Frazer tells us that "amongst the Narrinyeri, in South Australia, men of the snake clan sometimes catch snakes, pull out their teeth or sew up their mouths, and keep them as pets. In a pigeon clan of Samoa a pigeon was carefully kept and fed. Amongst the Kalang in Java, whose totem is a red dog, each family, as a rule, keeps one of these animals, which they will, on no account, allow to be struck or ill-used by anyone." The Egyptian cat clan treated cats as the Kalang treat red dogs.

At an early date the cat became a totem venerated all along the Nile. So also did the ibis, the hawk, the beetle, the asp, and other animals. Cicero says that no one ever heard of an Egyptian killing a cat; the remark might be made at the present day with almost equal truth. Herodotus

relates that, when a fire occurred in Egypt, the people's first idea was to save the cats and prevent them from leaping into the flames.

Not only were cats preserved from injury, respected, and petted during life, but they were buried with honour and mourned when dead. Many a parallel may be found to this custom of the ancient Egyptians. For instance, in Samoa, to quote once more from Mr. Frazer, "If a man of the owl totem found a dead owl by the roadside, he would sit down and weep over it and beat his forehead with stones till the blood flowed. The bird would then be wrapped up and buried with as much ceremony as if it had been a human being." The Egyptians' idea of respectable burial implied preliminary mummification. According to their notion, a living man consisted of a body, a *ka*, or ghost, a *ba*, or soul, and a "luminous." At death these component parts were broken asunder and set adrift. It was believed that some day all of them would come together again, and there would be a resurrection. This, however, could only happen if all the parts were preserved. Some of them might be destroyed by the infernal powers; that, of course, could not be prevented by surviving relatives. They could only help to keep the *ka* going. This *ka* was an impalpable double of the man's body; it was, in fact, the mediæval, or, for that matter, the modern, ghost. To keep it alive it had to be fed with the ghost of food, clothed in the ghost of clothing, and housed in the ghost of a house. It might be pleased and amused by the ghosts of luxuries and games, and served by the ghosts of slaves. The ingenuity of the ancient Egyptians may be measured by the fact that they not only invented the double, but found out how to supply it with all these things.

The ghost, or double, of a body (in ancient Egypt) had, however, to have a material something to be the double of. The actual body was, of course, best; second best was an image of it made in some lasting substance. Hence arose mummification to preserve the body, and portrait sculpture to replace it if destroyed. Such statues are called *ka* statues. If the mummy were destroyed the *ka* could still be kept in existence by means of them. A rich man was mummified in costly style, had many *ka* statues, and was buried in an elaborate tomb; a poor man was merely dipped in bitumen, rolled in a few yards of common stuff, and hidden in the desert sand.

As with men, so with cats. They, too, had their *ka* and all the rest of it, and their *ka* had likewise to be kept from annihilation against the great day of resurrection of cats, crocodiles, and men. A rich man's cat was elaborately mummified, wound round and round with stuff, and cunningly plaited over with linen ribbons dyed two different colours. His head was encased in a rough kind of *papier-mâché* mask, and that was covered with linen and painted, even gilt sometimes, the ears always carefully pricked up. The mummy might be enclosed in a bronze box with a bronze *ka* statue of the cat seated on the top. Even finer burial might await a particularly grand cat, as we shall presently see. A poor man's cat was rolled up in a simple lump, but the rolling was respectfully done, which is more than one can say about many a poor ancient Egyptian's body brought to light in these excavating days.

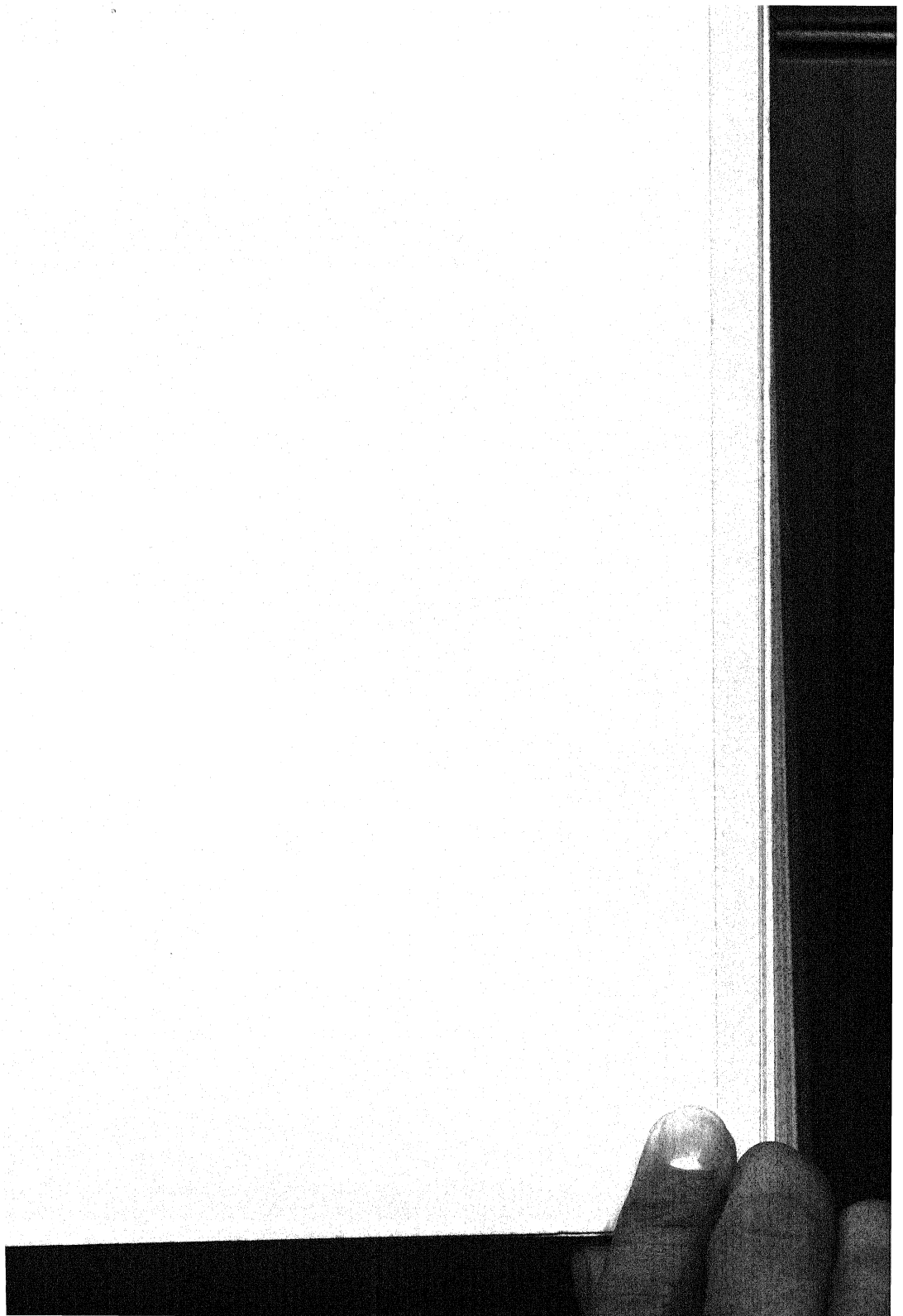
Egypt possessed many temples of the Cat Goddess. First among them was the great temple of Bubastis. It was called by Herodotus the most pleasing of all the temples of Egypt. A festival of an exceedingly merry and immoral

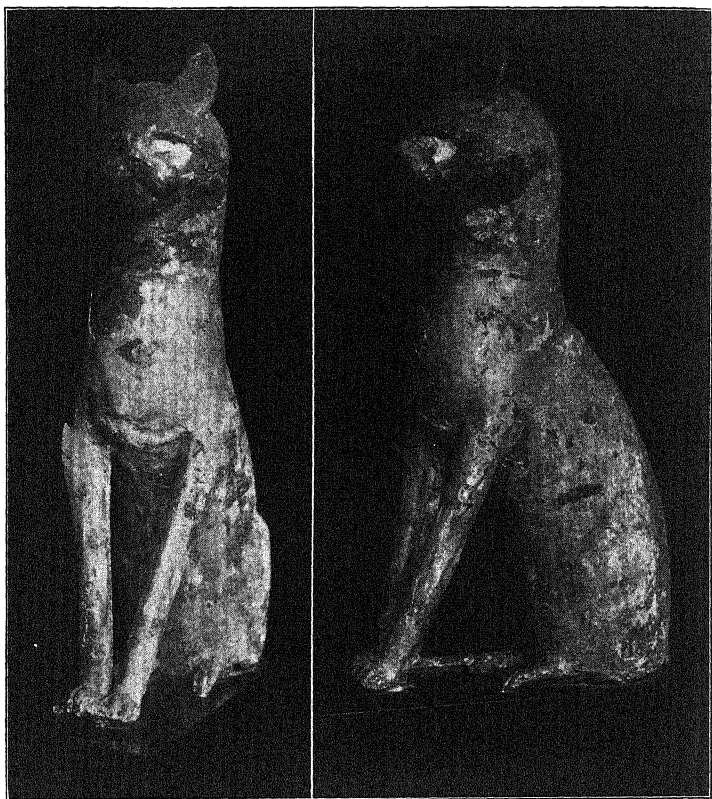
character was celebrated there to the yearly delight of thousands of Egyptians. Cat mummies and cat *ka* statues have been found in many parts of Egypt, but till recently ninety-nine out of a hundred of them came from Bubastis. In the summer of 1888, however, an enormous find of cats was made near Beni-Hasan, a place some hundred miles or so south of Cairo, and well known for its wonderful rock-cut tombs. That an important cats' burying-place would exist somewhere thereabouts might have been predicted from the fact that, as aforesaid, the famous Speos Artemidos exists in the immediate neighbourhood, and this temple was dedicated to Pasht. Cats must, therefore, have been specially venerated in the ancient city.

For three or four thousand years the cat mummies of Beni-Hasan lay undisturbed, awaiting the resurrection; then a resurrection came to them, but other than they had looked forward to. The archangel that heralded it was an Egyptian *fellah* from the neighbouring village. By some chance one day this genius dug a hole somewhere in the level floor of the desert, and struck—cats! Not one or two here and there, but dozens, hundreds, hundreds of thousands, a layer of them, a stratum thicker than many a coal-seam, in a series of pits ten to twenty cats deep, mummy squeezed against mummy, tight as herrings in a barrel. The discovery meant wealth for somebody. A systematic exploration of the pits was undertaken. The surface sand was stripped off, and the cats were laid bare. All sorts and conditions of them then appeared—the commoner sort caked together in black lumps, out of which here a grinning face, there a furry paw, or a backbone or row of ribs of some ancient puss stood prominently forth. The better cats and kittens emerged in astonishing numbers, and with

all their wrappings as fresh as if they had been put into the ground a week, and not thirty centuries before. Now and again an elaborately plaited mummy turned up; still more rarely one with a gilded face (of such I myself found three lying about). As far as I can learn, only three cat *ka* statues were found there. Two of these are small bronze figures. The third is a life-size bronze, a hollow casting, inside which the actual cat was buried. One or more bronze statuettes of Osiris, god of the dead, were likewise found among the cats. All these objects are in my possession.

The plundering of the cemetery was a sight to see, but one had to stand well to windward. The village children came from day to day and provided themselves with the most attractive mummies they could find. These they took down to the river-bank to sell for the smallest coin to passing travellers. Often they took to playing or fighting together with them on the way, and then the ancient fur began to fly as for three thousand years it had never been called upon to do. The path became strewn with mummy cloth and bits of cats' skulls, bones, and fur in horrid profusion, and the wind blew the fragments about and carried the stench afar. This was only the illicit part of the business. The bulk of the old totems went another way. Some contractor came along and offered so much a pound for their bones to make into something—soap or tooth powder, I dare say, or even paint. So men went systematically to work, peeled cat after cat of its wrappings, stripped off the brittle fur, and piled the bones in black heaps a yard or more high, looking from the distance like rotting haycocks dispersed over the sandy plain. The rags and other refuse, it appears, make excellent manure, and donkey-loads of





GILT BRONZE CAT
From Beni Hasan

Height $17\frac{1}{2}$ in

Facing p. 75

them were carried off to the fields to serve that useful, if unromantic, purpose.

I happened to be riding by just when some of the digging was toward ; while halting but a few moments the great gilt bronze cat was discovered. Presumably the villagers suspected that I might be some official who would be down on them for unauthorised appropriation of antiquities. At all events, they thought it better to be on the safe side, so the cat was huddled up in a rag and given to a small boy, who made off with it. Seeing what had happened, I followed him. He began to run, cutting away over the desert, with me in hot pursuit on rather a lazy donkey. I had neither whip nor spur, but only a kind of Mrs. Gamp umbrella wherewith to belabour my steed. The thwacks were more resounding than efficient. However, I was between the boy and his village, so that I could drive him towards the desert hills. The chase was long, but the scales of fate ultimately tipped my way, and as I finally came up with the truant he cast himself on his knees and held up to my delighted gaze the gilt bronze cat. All I desired was to purchase it, so that the boy's feelings underwent a swift and agreeable revulsion. We returned joyously together, I with the cat, he with a handful of piastres.

The bronze cat sits bolt upright (some eighteen and a half inches high), with her forelegs very straight and rigid and her paws set close together. Her neck is long, and perfectly cylindrical. Her head is practically a sphere, with a face patched on to the front. She is, in fact, almost the mathematical abstraction of a cat reduced to its simplest form. The inside of her body is hollow, and in it the cat's mummy was buried. Only the unmistakable smell and a

few scraps of mummy cloth remained behind when I first saw the creature. The whole thing, legs and all, was cast in one piece, the cores of clay, about which the forelegs are cast, being still inside them. The right leg has cracked; moisture at some time found its way to the clay within, which has swollen and burst the whole limb wide open. An interesting feature about this cat is that the whole body of it was thinly plastered over with a fine coating of *gesso*, and that this was gilded.* Alabaster eyes were also introduced. Most of the gilded *gesso* and one of the eyes remain. The maker of the cat did not intend it to be gilt. This is evident not only because the modelling of the face is entirely altered by the plaster, which is thereabouts quite thick, but because the whiskers were indicated by tooling about the mouth, and this tooling the *gesso*, before bits of it flaked off, entirely hid. A cat buried with such exceptional magnificence can have been no ordinary beast. It seems hardly too much to assume that it was the temple cat of its day, the sacred animal of that *Speos Artemidos* which all travellers in Egypt go to see. As such, at all events, the owner finds pleasure in regarding it.

The next collecting adventure I can remember was a wonderful night at Luxor, a village that in those days was a perfect hive of illicit antiquity dealers. No doubt most of the things they sold called for no secrecy, but it suited their notions of how best to impose on travellers to represent every object in their shops as a priceless treasure which the whole power of the local government was eager to seize

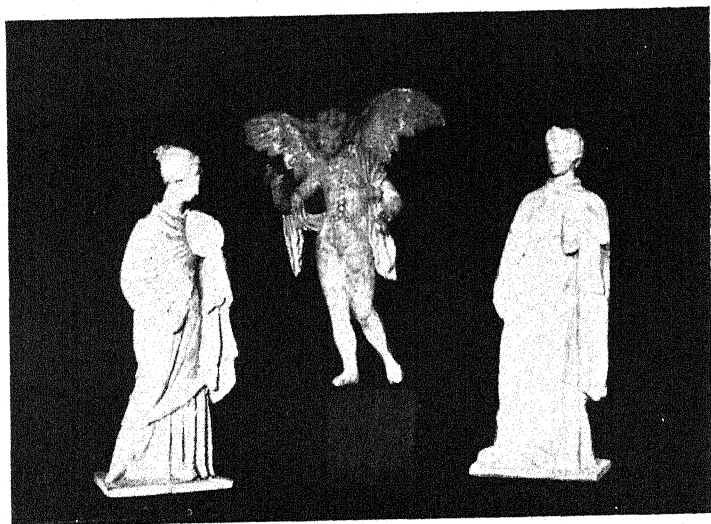
* There is a fine upright figure of Osiris in bronze at Leyden, which is plastered and gilt in a similar fashion. This method is very ancient. Compare some gilded, plastered, copper feathers found by Petrie in Pepy's Temple at Abydos (sixth dynasty).

for the glory of the Cairo Museum. They had plenty of forgeries, some almost perfectly made. Best were the scarabs. There must have been a genius at work producing them. I am told that he was as proud of his craft as Bastianini himself, and was indignant if anyone suggested that his scarabs were really old; but the dealers who bought from him had no such compunction.

I had spent two or three evenings in the dark native houses of Luxor, finding nothing but the ordinary poor rubbish that came to the surface everywhere in Egypt. At last I was taken, with what seemed no more than the usual precautions, into an inner room within the courtyard of a specially secluded house, and there, to my astonishment, they showed me a few quite extraordinary treasures. I knew enough to recognise them at once as work of the eighteenth dynasty, the most attractive period of ancient Egyptian art. We were in a low-roofed room with a little ramshackle furniture. The mud walls were naked. The floor was of hard mud. The place was very dirty. It was otherwise empty when we entered. Women, veiling their faces, brought things in from the background, one by one. First there was the head of a limestone statue of a woman, very finely wrought and with remains of paint on the voluminous wig. The long face, the drooping chin, the broken fragment of what must have been a long neck, were unmistakable. It was the head of some member of the family of the heretic King Amenhotep IV. A friend who was with me promptly acquired it. Then came a number of small objects, some of very fine quality, but they were all late, and the prices were high. It was no use trying to bargain. Take them or leave them was the order of the day. Then there was a delay. The whole affair was excel-

lently stage-managed. Faint sounds in the back quarters indicated that a heavy object was coming. Two persons brought it into the room and set it on the table. The cloth that covered it was removed, and I beheld a seated limestone figure about two feet high and in faultless preservation, the portrait statue of a princess of the family of the same Amenhotep. I have never seen a more perfect work of ancient Egyptian sculpture. It was admirable in design, delicate in finish, entirely portrait-like, and yet as completely incorporating the ancient Egyptian ideal of repose as if it had been solely imagined to that end. The limestone bust of Amenhotep IV. in the Louvre, which I did not then know, may have been a work by the same sculptor, but that is damaged, while this had not a scratch. It must have been recently removed from the tomb in which it had remained untouched and even unbeheld for upwards of three millennia. I ought at once to have recognised that these people had found access to royal tombs of the family of that Pharaoh who moved the capital of Egypt to Tel-el-Amarna. But I did not put two and two together till later. For half an hour I lingered regretfully over this beautiful object, whose price was far beyond my reach. In its presence all other objects seemed relatively little desirable. A Russian nobleman bought it next day, I believe, and I have never since heard tell of it. Like the bird of the Synod of Whitby that flew in at one door and out at the other of the great hall, the white princess came for me out of the night and vanished back into it again, but her beauty and perfection abide for ever in my memory.

Returning late to our boat, the men that followed me along the narrow lanes under the brilliant stars carried a few not undesirable acquisitions. These included the



TANAGRA AND ASIA MINOR TERRA-COTTAS
(See p. 103)



VARIOUS EGYPTIAN, PERUVIAN, AND OTHER OBJECTS

Facing p. 78

painted limestone figure of a kneeling priest holding a stele upright before him. He was Tuty by name, and his office was superintendent of the warehouse. The figure is good genuine work of the early part of the nineteenth dynasty. There was also a seated limestone portrait statue of a man, about twelve inches high, of the end of the same dynasty, a conventional example of well-known type. His name was Sebeh-menkh, and he was superintendent of the recruits. There was also an early wooden figure of a bread-maker, perfectly preserved, with its original wash of paint all over—a sketchy piece of work, but remarkably vital. The shadow or ghost of this figure buried in its owner's tomb was intended to supply that owner's ghost with the ghost of bread throughout all the long interval between his burial and his resurrection. It did its duty for the best part of 4,000 years, till the tomb-robbers carried it off. I wonder whether its owner's ghost now comes to Allington for hot rolls, and whether it hobnobs in the moonlight with the ghosts of Sir Thomas Wyatt and Anne Boleyn. There was also a small limestone figure of a woman of the seventeenth dynasty, two other small portrait statues, and a number of objects of minor interest and fragments.

A fortnight later, on our way down the river, we tied up late in the evening off Ekhmîn. At that time the place overflowed with Ptolemaic, Roman, and Coptic antiquities. The villagers seemed to possess right of free warren in the tombs of their forefathers, and those must have been legion. After dinner I landed with a boatman and a lantern, to visit the dealers, of whom there were several. They offered for sale wooden statues and alabaster vases, countless little statuettes, and an excellent wooden Boat of the Dead, with lots of painted oarsmen and steersmen, the dead man seated

in state under a four-post canopy, a priest and his son standing before him, and his wife behind kneeling on the deck. Such boats are common enough, but when one comes to them straight off the Nile they have a strangely vivid look. It was late in the season, and the market for the dealers' wares was nearly over, so they began bidding one against another for my custom. If I had had more sense I should have devoted more attention to the quantity of pieces of Coptic woven stuffs with figure designs upon them which were only then beginning to attract the notice they have since received in full measure. These old rags, however, seen by the light of a flickering oil lamp, are not particularly beautiful or attractive objects, and, besides, I had not begun to take interest in Coptic art. It was the three large wooden figures that attracted me, and I made an offer for one of them. As it was not accepted, I returned to the boat, and then the fun began.

The night was brilliantly starlit, and I could not drag myself away from the company of the constellations. I was only beginning to be familiar with the Southern Cross and that neighbourhood of the heavens, which we had slowly seen rise into view as we went southward, and were now as slowly losing on our northward return. In bygone years astronomy had been a chief interest for me, and for a long time no clear night went by without my spending a few hours at the telescope. Starry nights still bring back the feeling of those young days, their stillness and solitude, the wonder of the heavens, the excitement of a first view of some nebula, some double star, some glittering cluster, surely amongst the fairest sights the eye of man can behold. It was the memory of those even then far-past nights of bliss that kept me on the deck of the dahabiyeh till long

after midnight. The village, or part of it, remained awake ; there was a continual drumming and singing. Evidently some local fête was going on. At intervals dim shapes appeared on the bank and called out to me. They were the dealers still trying to tempt me with their wares. The wooden figures approached and vanished on the heads of dusky bearers. Trays of other objects, fitfully illuminated by smoky lights, were displayed, and then carried away. Prices were called out. Folk kept coming forth and retreating again into the night, only to reappear once more. At last, at two o'clock, I prepared to go to bed. The watchers saw that the decisive moment was come. The wooden figure I really wanted was brought forward once more and handed over to me at my own price. I took it down into my cabin, and it has dwelt with me ever since.

The only other incident of acquisition in Egypt which needs to be recorded is the way we obtained some Coptic steles of about seventh-century date. It was on one of those contrary days in March, when a strong north wind kept us from moving down-stream. As the day advanced it became evident that progress was going to be impossible till the morrow, so I rode off on a donkey to the Coptic settlement called Dair Manaos wa Shenude, some distance south of Esneh. The ruinous church consists of a kind of honeycomb of square chambers, each surmounted by its own little dome, supported on arches across the angles of the square, whilst pointed arched openings connected the chambers together and united them into a church. A great number of Coptic tombstones were built into the walls of the Dair, and there had once been many more. What had happened to them was shown by the neighbouring cluster of houses, of which many, in their turn, were in ruins. The

old steles had been pillaged and used as hinge-stones for the doors to turn on, or built in for coigns. A native followed us to one disroofed hut, which he assured us belonged to him. When he saw me examining the stones he promptly pulled down the remains of the door, disengaged the hinge-post from the round hole in the stone within which it had turned, pulled up the stone, and offered it to me for a piece of silver. I purchased it, and he promptly pulled down part of the wall and disengaged two more complete steles and some fragments. Fortunately, several of the boatmen had come with me. Each of them shouldered a stone, and we marched back in triumph with them to the dahabiyeh. They are now firmly built into the repaired part of a thirteenth-century wall at Allington Castle, from which it will be difficult to rend them forth. It is to save future antiquarians trouble when, say in the thirtieth century, this building may once again fall into ruin, that I here put on record the *provenance* of these stones!

CHAPTER VII.

FROM INDIA TO PERU

INDIA is not a very good country for hunting antiquities. One cannot carry away a Jain temple, even if one might. The decorative sculpture of mediæval India is not attractive ; at all events, not attractive to me. There are ancient bronzes to be found, but they give so much more pleasure to refined Indian lovers of their own past than to the European eye that it seems best to leave them where they belong. What the art-loving traveller is tempted to buy is modern or recent work, but it is very disappointing stuff in the long run. The carved tables, the hammered copper and silverwork, the *papier-mâché*, and even the shawls and embroidered or painted textiles, that look so attractive when displayed in the shadow of a verandah by picturesque native artisans in the light of India, lose half their romance, half their charm of colour, and more than half their general picturesqueness by transplantation to an English interior. What was packed up with pride is unpacked at home with disillusion. Who does not know the sets of carved ivory chessmen, the inlaid sandalwood boxes, the brass gods, and other the like bric-à-brac which, after glorifying the drawing-room of some retired Anglo-Indian, have drifted away into the cupboards of his descendants? England must be full of such stuff ; and yet when for the first time one comes across it in the

bazaars of India, it surprises with a strange attractiveness, only to disappoint yet one more purchaser when he gets it home.

When I was on my way to India, I knew perfectly well that I was not going to want any of these things, but there was one kind of object that I did want, and intended to get, if good luck would be with me. This was an example of what is known as the Gāndhāra School of Sculpture. Before Alexander the Great invaded North-West India, stone was not used in that country either for architecture or sculpture. They built in wood, and if they sculptured at all, which seems unlikely, it must have been in clay; but no examples of pre-Alexandrian Indian art have survived. It was the Greeks who taught the Buddhists of Swat and thereabouts to sculpture in stone, and the tradition thus founded lasted on. The best work of the kind is the earliest. The Greco-Bactrian School, of the third and second centuries before Christ, took firm hold, and spread its influences throughout the hill-country west of the Upper Indus, and in the vale of Kashmir, as well as across the great plain of North India. I am not concerned here to trace either its rise or its fortunes. Perhaps there may have existed a Buddhist school of art before the coming of the Greeks, and maybe the various types of Buddha and the incidents of his legend were modelled in clay or carved in wood before ever a Greek chisel crossed Iran; but no trace of any such early Buddhist art has been found, and its existence is doubted. As soon, however, as Buddhist craftsmen came in contact with the Greek tradition, and learned to use Western tools, their style, if they had one, was modified, as well as their technique, so that the earliest sculptures of what is known as the Gāndhāra School mani-

fest plainly the Greek element in their design. They were applied to the decoration of Buddhist sacred edifices, stupas, temples, monasteries, and such-like. For the most part they were wrought on a small scale. Some figures of about life-size there were, and others rather smaller, but the bulk of what survives is in the form of reliefs, almost in the round, carved in little niches out of the black slaty stone of the Swat country. For it is there and thereabouts that the bulk of the early Gāndhāra sculpture has been found. For some time Hoti Murdan was the chief source of supply, but a quantity was obtained from previously inaccessible sources by the Chitral expedition, and in consequence of the more or less settled conditions in those parts which then ensued. The school continued active for many generations, and shows changes of style corresponding to the passage of time. When the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom was replaced by the Indo-Scythians, and the Parthian Kingdom, in continual combat with Rome, intervened between India and the West, Buddhist art had to find its own way, free from Western influences. Thereupon the purely Indian spirit gained the upper hand, and before long, all but a faint trace of the original Greek impulse was lost.

Possessed by the desire to obtain if it were only a small fragment of this kind of sculpture of the early fine period, I made such careful study as opportunity threw in my way of the examples of it now honourably preserved in the museums of India, and especially at Lahore. Everywhere I sought for some unattached example that I might appropriate, but nowhere did success crown my efforts, and my last month in India had come. Thereupon I determined to go to Peshawar, as much on this quest as to visit the

Khyber Pass. The latter wish was fulfilled by the kindness of General Sir Henry Collett, who took me to visit the Pass, and gave me the delightful hospitality of a night with his telescope, an instrument that chance threw twenty years later into the possession of a kinsman of mine, so that I may hope some day to have the use of it for a night once more. I was leaving Peshawar the following afternoon, and only had a few hours left for the bazaars. Chartering a vehicle, I drove rather at random about the town, with my eyes open, and the thought of Gāndhāra sculpture always at the back of my head. Peshawar is a hotbed of Mussulman agitation, so that I was advised to be a little careful where I went, but when I passed the gate of a Hindu temple I felt that I might reasonably enough venture into the recesses of the fane of a people unpopular and unimportant in that locality. A stone-paved pathway led straight from the entrance gate through garden courtyards to the inmost shrine. Something attracted me to follow it as though I had been a needle drawn by a magnet. On approaching the *lingam*, I saw wherein the strange force resided, for there, actually leaning against the sacred stone, and thickly covered by the oil with which it was periodically anointed, was an admirable panel of Gāndhāra sculpture. As I was standing in the deserted shrine with the sculpture in my hands, an almost naked heathen came rushing toward me. His skin looked so very smooth and brown, and he appeared so comic, dancing about in a kind of fury, that some Puck-like spirit entered into me. Raising my hand, I gave him a resounding smack on his naked back, which startled him into a petrified silence. We stood like stone figures for a perceptible time, gazing at one another. My hand glided gently to my pocket, and produced certain



GANDHARA SCULPTURE

9½ × 4¾ in.

Facing p. 86

silver coins. His hand crept forth with the palm open. Nothing was said. I walked off quietly in one direction, bearing the carved relief, he vanished noiselessly in the other, clutching the rupees. Thus silence again descended on the sun-bathed temple, and an hour or two later the train was bearing me away toward Bombay and England.

The Buddha type, which may have taken form in North India before the coming of Greek influence, was certainly modified and dignified by that influence when the Gāndhāra sculptors translated it into stone. The form it then assumed became a standard, which went wherever the Buddhist religion spread, and was maintained with little alteration down to modern times. It is in Japan that the finest existing specimens of the type survive. Remarkable Buddhas and Bodhisattvas were made in Japan during a long succession of centuries, some of them being wonderfully noble sculptures, incorporating the repose of the East with a monumental dignity that found its earliest and perhaps its best expression in ancient Egypt.

About twenty years ago, owing to a change in the religious ideas of the Japanese, European markets were flooded with Japanese Buddhas* and Buddhist saints. These were of all sizes, large and small, and of various materials. Most were of wood, lacquered or gilt. Many were of bronze. I was greatly attracted by these figures, and bought several of them. They were commonest in London, but one met with them everywhere. Not infrequently they were employed to give an Oriental tone to the windows of

* I use this term loosely for any seated, cross-legged figure that looks to Western eyes like a Buddha. The majority of such figures do not, in fact, represent Gautama Buddha at all, but various saints and incarnations. All these figures, however, incorporate the same ideal, and are practically the expression of a single conception.

tea-shops. The wooden figures were frail, and probably a great number of them suffered rapid degradation, and, finally, destruction, in their last refuges in England. The purchasing public did not appreciate them, and I was thus enabled to buy the finest example that till then, or ever since, I have anywhere seen, out of a shop in Regent Street at a very small price. They told me that this figure had been in their hands for ten years, yet no one had ever even asked its price. It is a seated figure, nearly half life size. The type does not vary from the normal in any way, but it surpasses all other Buddhas known to me in the quality of the drapery and the refinement of the lines of the folds. It dates from the sixteenth or seventeenth century. It has lost the lotus pedestal and the gilt halo required to complete it. It was sold in a cabinet which, however, was originally used for another purpose.

Of similar size and type is a bronze Buddha seated on a lotus pedestal, and much more highly considered than its wooden companion. As sculpture, however, the wooden Buddha is greatly superior. The best part of the bronze example is the base, which is of remarkable delicacy and finish of detailed form. The lobes around the base are as beautiful as the finest eggs in the egg-and-dart mouldings of Greek buildings of the culminating period of Greek architecture. On the back is the following inscription, translated for me by my friend, Mr. Shugio: "Respectfully dedicated to the temple of Ankoji of Kamakura, July 3rd, in the first year of Genroku (1688), by Kobayashi Heikichi, the donor."

There are a good many other Japanese objects that have fallen in my way, most of them picked up years ago, before such things became costly, but I will only mention one lot—



A GILT BUDDHA

Height 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Facing p. 88



a bucketful of wrought-iron sword-guards, some beautifully inlaid, but all of the early time before the great elaboration of these articles became fashionable. I forget how we heard of them. It was, I remember, the day before I was sailing for India, when there was not a moment to spare. My wife ultimately ran them to earth in the City, and bought them by weight for little more than the value of the metal. There was only one bucketful of them left. Twice as many had been practically given away the day before.

In the western part of Tibet, which belongs to the kingdom of Kashmir, and is named Ladakh, Buddhism, or a form of it called Lamaism, still flourishes. Every village has its temple and its lamasery, and at points on all the roads are Buddhistic monuments—Chortens, mani-mounds, prayer-wheels, and the like. In this part I was able to acquire a certain number of objects of small intrinsic value, but of archæological interest, which Sir Augustus Franks gladly accepted from me for the British Museum. The monks at Hemis and the other important monasteries are wisely careful to keep every sacred object that belongs to the temple. They will not sell an image, a banner, or a book that belongs to them, and I trust that this attitude of theirs will continue. I daresay that under the shadow of darkness it might have been possible to overcome their scruples, but I had no desire to try, and the more so that at Hemis I was the guest of the convent, and they even performed a splendid religious ceremony for my edification, with much singing, beating of drums, and splendour of masks and costumes. So I made no attempt on the temple treasures, the figured banners of all colours, the images large and small in clay or brass, the illuminated manu-

scripts, and all the stores of things, many of them fine works of the Lhasa School, and of considerable antiquity, with which this great store-house overflows.

From the smaller religious centres, however, I did not go quite empty away. Thus, one night, when I was encamped below Lamayuru, strange things happened. I had visited the Gonpa in the afternoon, and been shown over it. I had lingered for some time in the library, where what seemed to be immense quantities of manuscripts were stored. In particular there was a great set of books written on large cardboard-like leaves stained blue, the text being written in alternate lines coloured to resemble gold, silver, and copper. There were also circular miniatures delicately painted in bright colours at frequent intervals. The books of this set, tied up between moulded boards for bindings, must have numbered several hundreds. They were stacked together in apparent confusion, many having burst their strings, so that the loose leaves had poured forth and been chaotically mixed together. I lusted for some of these leaves, and asked to buy them, but great difficulties were made, though I was finally allowed to carry off a few in the "keeper's" pocket of my coat. No sooner had darkness come on, and I was settled down with my fellow-travellers to our evening meal, than a monk from the Gonpa slipped quietly into camp. The servants brought him to me, and he began to talk volubly, but none of us knew a word of Tibetan, and he knew nothing else. The substance of what he had to say was easily made apparent when he produced a couple of manuscripts from the folds of his raiment. I tried to explain to him that I was not interested in unilluminated MSS., and gave him back his offering, but he would not take it. He just left the books on the floor

of the tent and slipped away. An hour later he was back again, this time with a blue coloured manuscript like those I had seen in the Gonpa Library, but whether it had belonged to the set I could not tell. He pushed it under the fly of the tent, and then held out his hand.

These Tibetan monks were curious people. I met one of them on the road saying his prayers by rotating a wheel as he walked slowly along. He was carrying a copper vessel, in shape like a teapot, with a turquoise mounted on the spout, also a little plate and spoon and a couple of small cymbals united by a chain, and very useful for driving away devils. He offered them to me, and demanded a price in rupees, which I paid him. His things were duly packed into one of our pieces of baggage, and we were about to go forward, when he sat down and began to weep bitterly. I enquired why he was weeping. He said it was because I was taking away his *manis* (sacred things), which had belonged to his forefathers. I had them unpacked and offered to return them. He was delighted, but would not give back the rupees. He said he wanted to keep both them and his *manis*. I told him to put the rupees on the ground beside his things. He did so. "Now, choose which you will have—the rupees or the *manis*." He picked up the rupees and went his way, again weeping loudly as long as we were within hearing. When I looked back on him from a remoter distance, he appeared to have recovered his peace of mind.

The day after our visit to Lamayuru, we camped at Saspul, where is a new Gonpa, built down by the road-side, containing three colossal figures, badly modelled in mud, and with the walls crudely painted. I had been advised to hunt up the ruins of the old Gonpa. What remains of

it is the rock-cut chambers, rudely hollowed out of a hard conglomerate cliff. They were closed in front by built-up walls. There were quite a number of these chambers, in rows and storeys one above another, and connecting galleries and staircases had been built up in front out of crude brick; in fact, it was a typical mountain Gonpa of the traditional sort. Several of the larger chambers still retain their painted decoration. The paintings were done on plaster laid against the nubby conglomerate walls. Here and there a refractory portion of the surface was covered with canvas, and the painting had been done on it on the same kind of ground as that with which the plaster was overlaid. A portion of canvas had fallen from the wall, and was lying about in the dust on the floor. As the whole place was utterly abandoned, I had no hesitation in rescuing this fragment from the destruction which was overtaking the rest. The pictures included hundreds of little seated figures, like Buddhas, and many larger ones of gods, devils, and the like. There was a seated saint, teaching, surrounded by some fifty or more minute disciples. There was also the figure of Avalokita with the Thousand Arms, so popular hereabouts; and there were besides many illustrations of legends which I had not the knowledge to interpret. The drawing was admirably done with a free and certain line, and the figures in action were drawn with spirit; the colours were applied flat, and were few in number and good in quality, combination, and proportion. I don't think the paintings date from before the seventeenth century. They contain, however, that mixture of Indian with Chinese traditions which Dr. Stein has revealed in the Central Asian art of a much earlier period.

A leap from Tibet to Peru—from 75 deg. east longitude

to 75 deg. west—may seem somewhat inconsequential; yet, just as the fertile parts of Chile behind Valparaiso always kept reminding me of Kashmir, so the desert region of the Andes bears a remarkable resemblance to Western Tibet. The traveller going from Europe to Peru looks forward to landing in a world markedly "new," but the first impression he actually receives is of the extreme antiquity of man in that land. Peru and Bolivia, especially Bolivia, have the aspect of antiquity quite as markedly as India, except where purely European conditions have been introduced, and both countries are alike in that respect also. The Indian aborigines of the land of the Incas have all the aspect of an ancient race, still in the possession of their own most venerable traditions and civilisation. European influence seems not to have touched them any more than it has touched the mass of the natives of India.

But it is not only the Quichuas and Aymaras and other surviving peoples of Peru and Bolivia that seem ancient. The buildings of the Spanish conquerors likewise possess a venerable aspect. Lima seemed to me more like a restored Pompeii than anything else. Its houses, with their courtyards, their blank faces to the street, their aspect of reserve and readiness for defence, appear anything rather than modern. Almost any city in Europe looks young compared with Lima. Hence, from the moment of arrival, my thoughts were turned rather back into the past than to the present or the future; because, of course, the history and antiquities of any old country must always be more interesting than its current activities or its future prospects, except perhaps to the inhabitants themselves. What can be more boring to a foreigner than to have some citizen of the place he is visiting describe to him at length all that

that city is going to be in some future near or distant? Eloquent local prophets of local glories to come no doubt have a good time with their contemporaries at home, but they should not be permitted to travel unmuzzled. Which of us has not suffered from such?

The first shop I discovered in Lima was one that dealt in antiquities. But you do not buy genuine old things cheaply in those parts. Wealthy local collectors are numerous and persistent. Old Spanish silver is hard to find and very costly. In the earliest colonial days silver was a common metal, and every self-respecting descendant of the conquerors had his table service made by local craftsmen out of silver. Such plates and bowls are of great thickness and weight, generally almost plain, and lacking in grace of form. I found them undesirable, and although I once came across some fair specimens in a Bolivian finca, which the owner would have given me for the value of the silver, I had no desire to possess them.

It will, I imagine, surprise many European collectors to be told that South America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries produced furniture of excellent quality and original design. The styles of Panama, Guayaquil, and Lima were all different, and local collectors diligently seek for the products of the old cabinet-makers of those places. The finest piece of furniture I saw was in the house let furnished to the Secretary of the United States Legation at the time of my visit to Lima. It was a great mahogany table at which the Inquisitors used to sit. The top was very massive, and of splendid wood, and it was supported on four lion-legs magnificently carved. I thought I had succeeded in purchasing it, but there was some misunderstanding, and it never reached England.

It is the misfortune of Peruvian antiquities that the excavation of Inca cemeteries and remains has seldom been scientifically carried out. As a rule the manager of some sugar estate or person engaged in business finds *huakkas* in the ground, and proceeds to dig them up, without paying the slightest regard to how they were buried, or putting on record any of the facts which are essential from a student's point of view. Only the other day a friend of mine was asked to bring home for sale on behalf of the finder a great mass of gold objects which had been discovered in various *chulpas* and tombs, but the finding-place of none of them was recorded, and as they are ugly, and of little interest in themselves, three-quarters of their value was thus destroyed. As with these gold ornaments, so it is generally with Inca antiquities of all kinds. There is no record with any of them of the circumstances of their discovery. Hence, though by the kindness of friends rather than by my own exertions I was able to bring away a few quite fine examples of pottery, I cannot say in any case where they were found.

The first pot that came into my hands was one in the form of an animal of the cat tribe—I suppose a puma. It was evidently intended by fate to be a companion for the Egyptian bronze cats, and, in fact, they have now lived peacefully together for many years. Only once have I heard them caterwauling in the night, and even then I may have been mistaken. My greatest prize, however, was a pot that is to all intents a plain portrait bust, but for the addition of a spout-handle at the back of the head. These portrait pots of superior quality are rare, and belong to the best period of their school. The finest I ever saw belonged in 1898 to Mr. Clay, at Lima, and it was he who

gave me mine. Both were dug up on the same sugar estate in Peru, I believe near Chimbote.

The only other Inca antiquities I acquired were given to me in Bolivia by gentlemen who had been made kindly disposed towards me by my ascent of the great sacred mountain Illimani. One of the mementoes of that climb was a tiny bronze object of axe-like form, with a human figure rudely modelled on it. It was found at Cusco. The other object came from the same place. It is of wood, and looks as though it had been cut off the top of a staff. It represents a monkey, squatting on a base, over which his tail hangs down behind. Never was monkey squarer-built or more composed, or with such wide-opened eyes, or such cocked-up ears, for all the world like a cat's. He holds a human head in his teeth by the hair, and steadies it with both hands. Age has endowed the wood with an iron-like hardness, but who made it, or when, or what it means, heaven only knows.

In the southernmost part of the South American continent, where I likewise went a-climbing, the only antiquities I came upon were Fuegians actually dwelling in the kitchen-midden stage of the Stone Age. They were as fat as porpoises, and I saw them sitting in apparent comfort in an open canoe, with the snow falling and melting upon the rotund surfaces of their naked bodies. They hunt the shores of the Fuegian archipelago for bottles thrown overboard by passing steamers, and out of fragments of these they fashion arrow-heads, as neolithic man fashioned them out of flints. Darwin once collected a live Fuegian, but he was a troublesome acquisition. I had no desire to follow even so distinguished an example.

CHAPTER VIII.

GREEK AND ROMAN ANTIQUITIES

THE claim is now often made that in England more art treasures of the past lie hid awaiting identification than anywhere else in the world. The most important recent addition to the recognised sculptures of the Parthenon was a fine fragment discovered on a rockery at Colne Park, Essex. I myself found employed as an ornament in an English garden one of the splendid wind-blown acanthus capitals made to the order of Theodoric the Ostrogoth for a church at Ravenna, and afterward used in Italy as a well-head.* The old gardens of England doubtless possess a still unsuspected treasure of such objects. I have a drawing of a very elaborately sculptured mediæval cross-head, described as having been made from a stone in the rockery of a Rectory garden. Several fountains of great antiquity have been rescued from pig-sties, farmyards, and the like unkenned localities. The only antique marble bust which it has been my good fortune to acquire was bought out of a back garden at Cambridge. The owner thought he remembered to have been told by his father that some old don brought it home from Italy a long time ago. The story sounds quite eighteenth century. Dons nowadays seldom come home from their holidays with a marble bust in their luggage.

* See *Country Life*, October 11th, 1913.

The bust in question is of Greek marble. The head has evidently been broken off at the root of the neck from a full-length figure. Its left shoulder droops slightly, and there is a corresponding inclination of the neck, with the head somewhat turned toward an erect position. The fragment is inserted into draped shoulders supported by a base, carved in late Renaissance style out of a coarser and greyer marble than the head. The waving locks of hair enframing the forehead are deeply grooved by means of a drill in a manner characteristic of the time of the Antonines. The crown of the head is merely roughed out, and was originally surmounted by some kind of head-dress, probably of metal. The stump of the pin which fixed it remains embedded in the marble. I have not found it possible to point to any definite original from which this copy has been taken. At a first glance the type appears to go back to the fifth century, but the soft, rounded oval of the face, the massive neck, the small, slightly opened mouth, and the form of the eyes, are all features characteristic rather of the followers of Scopas, and in particular of the Niobide group. Probably the Roman copyist had some original by an eclectic sculptor before him. The Barberini Hera is nearest to the required type. Furtwängler attributes the original of that to Alkamenes. Helbig's idea is that it was the work of some Hellenistic artist of about the second century B.C., who combined fifth and fourth century types of head and body. In these misty regions of conjecture as to copies of lost originals by unidentifiable artists, who derived their style by imitation of the styles and traditions of earlier artists, whose work in their turn is only known from vague descriptions and probably inaccurate copies, it seems to me that definite assertions by one who makes no claim to be a



ANTIQUE BUST
Total height 27 in.

Facing p. 98

specialist in these matters may be spared. The head has never been exhibited, nor have I had the advantage of discussing it with any of the recognised major authorities on ancient sculpture.

Far more attractive than this marble bust is another on a smaller scale, sculptured in that most refractory of all stones—porphyry. It represents a youth, as it were, a young David, with head erect on a long, slender neck, the smooth surface of the finely formed face and delicate features being set off delightfully by the loosely flowing hair, which, in contrast to the finish of the face, is only roughly blocked out. It is the very incarnation of high breeding and youthful purity, like some youth beloved of Leonardo*—alert, confident, and keen, without forebodings and without regrets.

One of the most remarkable achievements of those earliest Egyptians of whose work we possess survivals was the discovery how to work the hardest rocks supplied to them by nature in the neighbourhood of their homes. Bowls and dishes of granite, diorite, and other hard stones in considerable number have been found in tombs of the earliest dynasties, not roughly hammered out, but truly and exquisitely wrought to a high degree of finish. Already by the time of the Middle Empire magnificent monumental statues were made, and the traditions of this art were maintained thenceforward. Who that has beheld it can ever forget the majesty of the great Ramses II. at Turin? It is an error to say, with Helbig and others, that fine modelling is not as possible of attainment in porphyry and diorite as in marble, and that, therefore,

* A drawing in the Louvre attributed to Boltraffio (Braun, No. 176), might almost have been suggested by this bust seen in profile.

sculpture in the hardest rocks must be inferior in quality. Fine modelling is possible in any material, but not the same kind of fineness. The Ramses II. is finely modelled in a style proper to diorite. The Hermes of Praxiteles is finely modelled in a style proper to marble. To model porphyry as though it were marble would not be to model it finely. Egyptian sculptors preserved throughout the whole course of their history a complete understanding of how to work the hardest stones, and of what could properly be done with them. In the Hellenistic period the workshops of Alexandria turned out both porphyry and basalt sculpture, whilst in early Roman Imperial days attempts were made to introduce a taste for objects of this class into Rome. It was not, however, till the time of the Antonines that sculpture in the hardest stones became popular. Marble heads were then fitted into coloured shoulders, and draperies were imitated in variegated polished stones. It was a vulgar and unseemly degradation of the ancient dignified art of Egypt, and only had vogue for a short time, as a fashion among the wealthy rather than a taste among the refined. Finally, in the fourth century, a return was made to the traditions of a better period, and a certain number of notable portrait-figures and sarcophagi were turned out by Alexandrian craftsmen. Such are the figures in the Museums of Ravenna and Cairo, and the portrait groups in the Vatican and on the outside of the Treasury of St. Mark's at Venice. Soon afterwards the art of working porphyry fell into neglect, though mediæval craftsmen were still able to cut sections of antique columns and work them into mosaic pavements. The thirteenth-century porphyry sarcophagi of Frederick II. and other members of his house must also have been contemporary work. Later on,



PORPHYRY BUST

Facing p. 100

however, the art of shaping porphyry seems to have fallen into total oblivion. Vasari (Milanesi edition, I., p. 109) relates how efforts were made by Leon Battista Alberti and others to rediscover the lost craft, and how, at last, in 1555, success was attained in fashioning a large fountain basin in porphyry for the Grand Duke, and presently thereafter in certain portrait bas-reliefs.

This brief résumé of the history of porphyry sculpture proves clearly enough that the beautiful little porphyry bust of a lad in my possession is not, as I at first supposed it to be, a Florentine work of the fifteenth century, because no one alive in the fifteenth century knew how to sculpture porphyry at all. If it recalls in some degree the David of Verrocchio, it is because it was antique work of this type that Verrocchio endeavoured to rival when he modelled the David. The workshop from which this bust came was not in Florence, but in Alexandria, and the traditions it incorporates are not Tuscan, but Hellenistic.

By a curious coincidence the crown of the head of this bust, like that of the marble bust previously described, was originally covered with some kind of metal head-dress, and the stump of the rivet that held it firm here likewise remains embedded in the stone. Probably a metal wreath surmounted the rich ring of curly hair that so charmingly sets off the severe form of the face. Careful examination shows a number of polished, metal-stained spots remaining on the stone where the head-dress used to rub against it. The pedestal is a modern addition. The only injuries are a large chip at the root of the neck in front and a breakage that cuts right through the neck and the thick mass of hair behind, dividing the whole stone in half. This breakage may have been produced by the sculptor himself. As to the history

of the head before it came into my hands, I know nothing, except that it was acquired in Italy.*

Judging from the rapid increase in the departments of classical antiquities in American and other museums, the supply of ancient sculpture obtainable has by no means come to an end. The sale of such objects is, however, mainly carried on *sub rosa*, despite the opposition of Governments, and it does not become me here to relate what little I may have been told about it. Chances have now and again come in my way, as, for instance, many years ago at Alexandretta, when a person of ill-defined profession visited me on a steamer anchored in the bay, and produced photographs of some half-dozen marble sculptures he had for sale. They were all, he said, safely out of reach of the Turkish authorities, and he named a French port where I could see them. But what is an ordinary householder to do with life-size marble figures? I was obliged to decline to become their possessor. A few years later I saw one of them comfortably housed in the fine gallery of the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek at Copenhagen. It is a high, almost round relief, representing Attis, and came from Cyzicus, where it appears to have adorned the side-post of a doorway, the pendant to it being a Cybele.† There is a similarly attached figure, also from Cyzicus, at Liverpool.

In Smyrna I once had a notable afternoon's entertainment. That was in the days when the supply of genuine and fine terra-cottas had not ceased, though the number of excellent forgeries put into circulation was already very

* A curly-headed youth or maiden, wearing a close-fitting cap, such as might possibly have been the completion likewise of the porphyry bust, is depicted in a well-known painting within a circular medallion found at Herculaneum, and now in the Naples Museum.

† See Arndt's "Catalogue of the N.C. Glyptotek," pl. 144 and text.

large. Smyrna was supposed to be a centre of the industry. Examination of one or two dealers' stores there showed me that a market of forgeries must be near at hand, and I eagerly desired to run it to earth. As if anxious to obtain a large number of terra-cottas for some foreign market, I intimated that I did not greatly care whether they were genuine or not. After much negotiation and going from place to place, ultimately I was taken to what appeared to be the workshop of an Italian plasterer. The front room was full of plaster casts of modern works. Behind that was the moulding-room, and further back, across a little courtyard, what proved to be the headquarters of the local Tanagra-forgery. Here I was shown a number of genuine antique moulds which had been dug up, some in Greece, others in Asia Minor. There were also many modern moulds taken from genuine originals. The clay used came from the neighbourhood, and was believed to be the very clay which the ancient potters had used over two thousand years ago. It was thus easy for a skilful workman to cast and bake figurines which were practically identical with the antiques they were intended to be taken for. These new figurines, fresh from the oven, were delightful objects, but I was not permitted to acquire any of them. The next stage was generally to break them up. A large trade was done in heads, arms and legs, backs, etc. Very few even approximately complete figures or groups were allowed to go forth. The best were carefully painted, and then "aged" in a fashion too disgusting to be described. Armed with the knowledge thus acquired, I was better able to distinguish genuine from false thereafter, and I succeeded in obtaining out of Smyrna and Athens three perfect figures. One was a delightful winged Eros, with traces of paint on the deli-

cately modelled body. He was skilfully constructed, so that he stands firmly balanced on one foot and just a toe of the other. Even his little fingers are almost complete. Round his head is a floral wreath. The two others are ladies fully draped, and each holding a fan—a common type at Tanagra. One of these retained its old surface in very good preservation, and I was particularly proud of it. Many years later I was showing it to an expert, and to my surprise he said it looked like a forgery. I examined it closely, and lo! the surface was wholly new—every trace of the old coloration was gone. Domestic investigation at length brought forth an explanation. One day while I was in India the thing had been moved, and broken. The fragments were taken to a mender, who joined them together, and washed the whole over to hide the breaks. The figure was put back into its glass case with the others, and years passed before I chanced to notice what had been done.

At Athens it was easy enough to buy antiquities, but difficult to get them out of the country. While I was considering a small Greek stele, and wondering how, if I bought it, I could get it away, the representative of a German museum carried it off between sunset and sunrise. The dealer was really a delightful person. As usual, I was in an impecunious state at the end of a prolonged journey. There were a number of things I wanted to carry away—an archaic bronze priestess as a mirror handle, some vases, a fine Albanian belt in silver filigree and enamel, and some other trifles. I told the man if he would keep them for me I would buy them three months later, and he could send them. He agreed; but added that it would save him a lot of trouble if I would take them with me and send him the money three months later. I had no objection. He

vanished into an inner room, and came out with a paper in his hand. This proved to be a *receipted* bill for the things. I said, "This is not a bill, but a receipt." "I know it," he replied. "I've been thinking that when you send me the money I shall have to send you the receipt; and it may go wrong in the post; and then you'll have to write and say you have not got it, and I shall have to write again. Now if you take the receipt with you all that trouble will be saved for both of us"!

Cyprus also was a place where genuine antiquities of many kinds were easy to acquire. When I was there, Syrian glass of early Roman Imperial date was obtainable in considerable quantities, but the difficulty was to bring it safely home, so tender was the surface, so frail the fabric. Most of this glass, recovered from ancient tombs, was originally colourless; but time has endowed much of it with a brilliant iridescence, sometimes of extraordinary beauty. I carried off several examples, and actually took them home in my hand to London, where they arrived in safety. The iridescence does not seem to have altered in any way during upwards of twenty years, but it is not so bright, and never was, as that on a broken fragment of a modern wine-bottle which was dug the other day out of a filled-in part of the moat at Allington.

It is scarcely worth while relating other such small adventures among Levantine dealers. The really sporting way to acquire antiques is to excavate for them, and no chance of so doing has yet fallen to my lot except in Kent. There I have emptied filled-in moats and dug up the foundations of ancient buildings, but discovered nothing older than George III. ha'pence. Outside the north wall of Allington Castle there does indeed remain, undiscovered

as yet, a very precious buried treasure. This is nothing less than a Golden Pig, which has been hidden there from a remote antiquity. The trouble with that, however, is that the man who finds it thereupon always "softly and silently vanishes away, and never is heard of again." The last time that happened was some fifty years ago. Currant-bushes then grew on the site, and a certain labourer was seen hoeing among them. He has never been beheld since. The conclusion is obvious. He found the Golden Pig! The question remains: did he take it away?

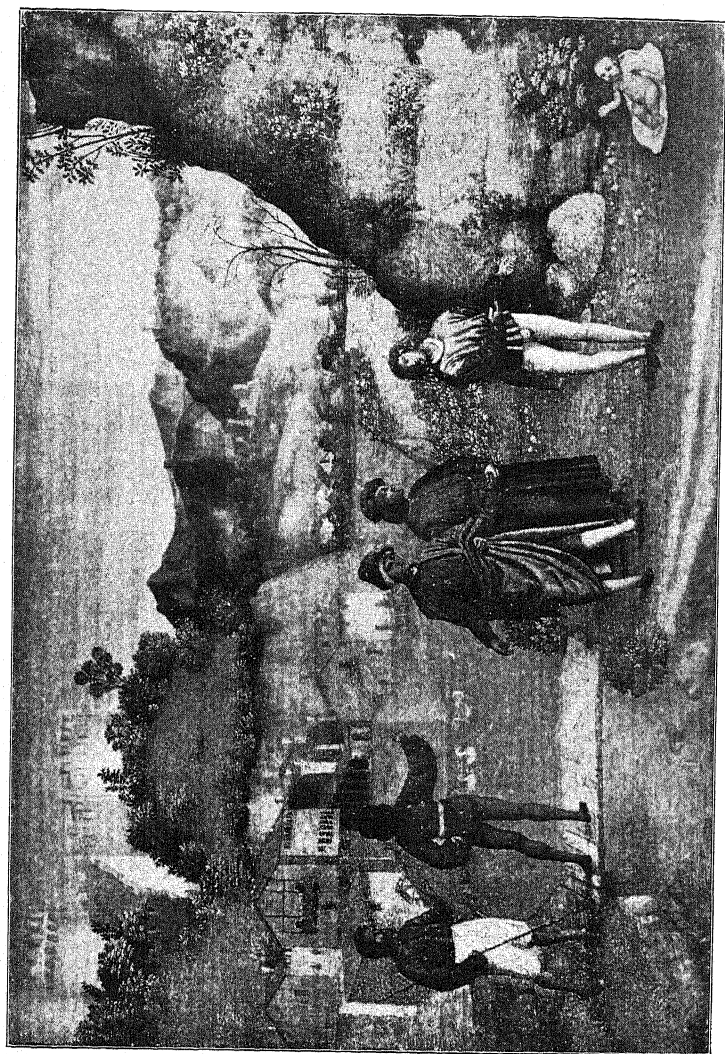
CHAPTER IX.

A FIND OF GIORGIONES

IN the summer of 1903 we made an extensive motoring tour throughout the length and breadth of France, and wherever we went we searched the antiquity shops with patient thoroughness. It was not till we reached Biarritz that we began to strike a fertile field; but there and thereabouts many good things were on sale which had drifted over out of Spain. We made a certain number of acquisitions, under quite ordinary circumstances, which it would be tedious to linger over; but one adventure is worth describing at length.

In those days motor-cars were not the safe and sound means of locomotion they are now supposed to be. Ours, at any rate, perhaps through our own fault, was always providing us with surprises, especially after it had collided with a cow somewhere in the neighbourhood of Bayonne. The cow did not mind, but our car did, and its internal mechanism was never quite the same again. This delayed us at Biarritz. I had a passionate desire to go to St. Jean de Luz, but next day something occurred to prevent our start, and took us to the garage instead. At last, after lunch the third day, we succeeded in starting, and gaily ran about five miles. Then bang!—a tyre burst, and we had to halt and put on another. That punctured, and so did

a third. I was for turning back. I said, "We are not intended to get to St. Jean de Luz. It's just as well to bow to the decrees of Fate first as last." But my wife said, "No. You've had a queer and apparently insensate desire to go to this place, and go we must. There's something for us there, and we've just got to go and get it." So we travelled slowly on, with only some perilously old tubes on our wheels, expecting every moment that our last tyre would burst and we should be left stranded. That did not happen. We presently reached St. Jean de Luz and proceeded to investigate the dealers' shops. There were one or two in the main street, and they contained nothing worth looking at. I said, "Let us have tea and go back to the hotel." My wife said, "No; there must be another shop. I am certain there is something for us in this place." So we turned down a side street and came out on a flat expanse leading off to the sea. "What nonsense it is," I said, "to be looking for anticas here! You might as well dig for them in the sand." An old fisherwoman, or someone of that class appeared, and I was bidden to ask her whether there was not an antica-shop hereabouts. The notion of asking her seemed to me absurd. What could an old fisherwoman know of such things, and who on earth would dream of keeping an antica-shop in such a neighbourhood—off the track of visitors and in the midst of a fishing population? However, I am nothing if not docile, so I pursued the old woman and asked my question. "Yes!" she replied. "Just round that corner there is a house where they sell all sorts of old things; you will have no difficulty in finding it." Round the corner we went, and there was a house with the door open. Through it we could see the glitter of brass, the



GIORGIONE
17½ x 25½ in.

chaos of old furniture, and pictures on the walls. I entered amidst the usual rubbish, and was about to go out again and say there was nothing, when I saw an open door at the end of the room, and through it I could look into a room beyond. My attention was instantly arrested by two pictures hanging high up on a wall at the farthest end of that. I did not move or speak, but kept the corner of my eye on those pictures while occupied with objects close at hand. The pictures were quite far away, and the light was poor, but there was no doubt we were now close to something very good. I went out to my wife and said, "In the far corner of the second room are two Venetian pictures which just might be Carpaccios. Don't seem to look at them, but come in and let's look at everything else."

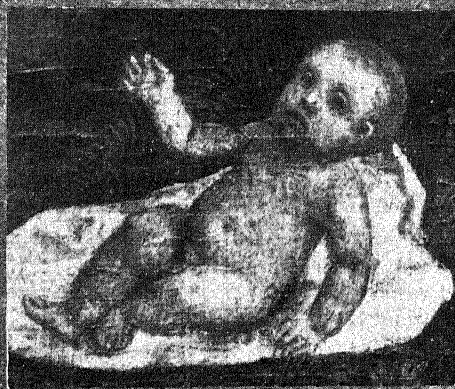
When we came near them I felt my heart thumping within me like a piston. I whispered that they were early Giorgiones, and that we must certainly buy them at any price. Finally, we had them taken down and placed in our hands, one after the other, the last things we looked at. It is hard under such circumstances to hide one's emotions, but we succeeded. A price was quoted—thank goodness, moderate. The purchase was made then and there. In a few minutes we were back in our car and away for Biarritz as hard as we could go. Somehow it seemed as though punctures were no longer to be expected. None occurred, at any rate, and we were able to travel fast; but the hour that intervened before we could reach our rooms and examine the new treasures at leisure and with minute attention seemed like a long afternoon. It was past midnight before we had rejoiced enough to be able to think of sleep.

The two panels were not in the best state of preserva-

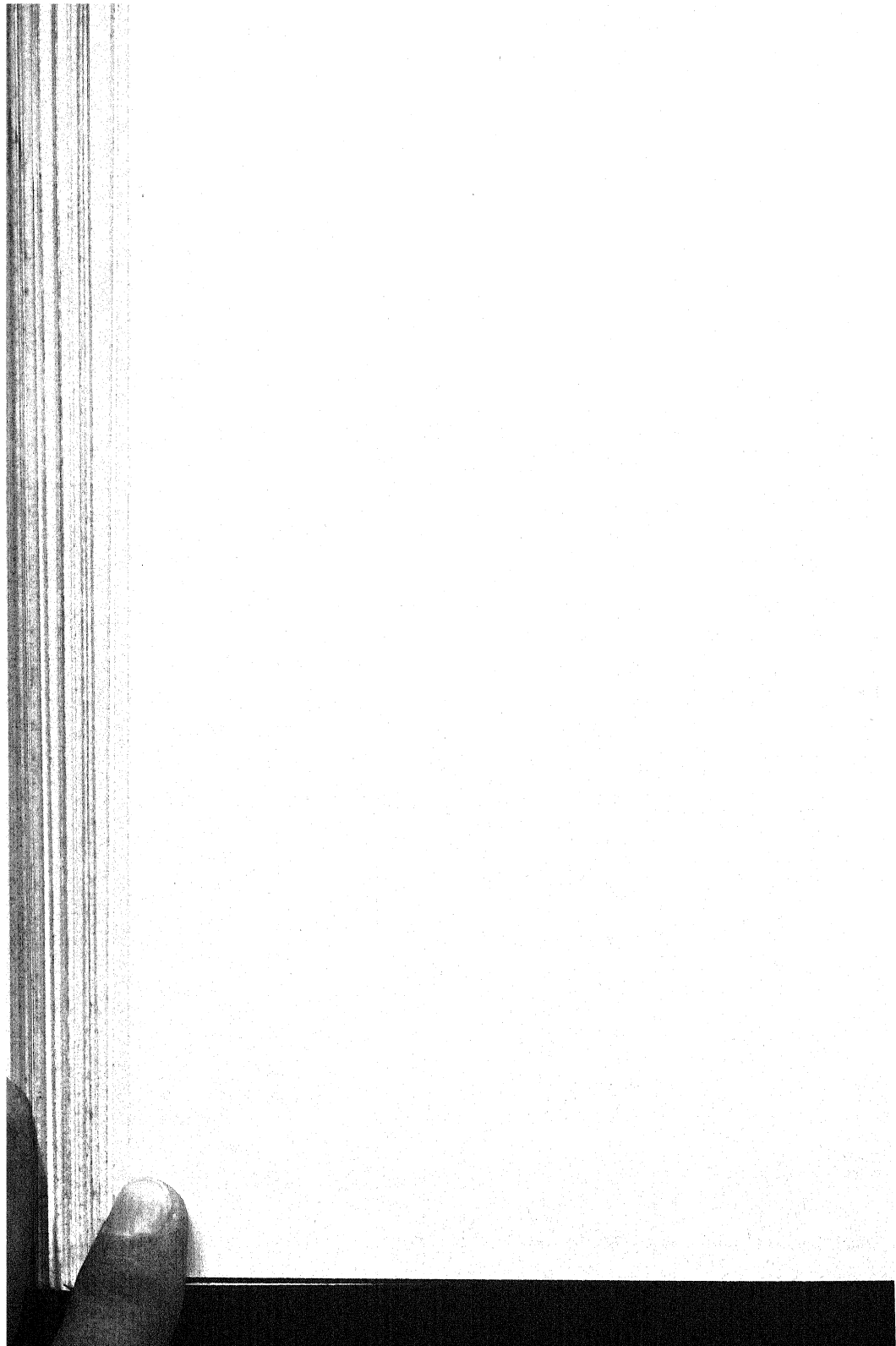
tion. One was cracked right across, and the paint had begun to "bubble off" both; but all the figures were intact, and the damage was confined to relatively unimportant parts of the painting. I forget whether it was Mr. Herbert Cook or Mr. Robert Ross who first told me the meaning of the subjects, the "Finding of Paris" and "Paris being put out to Nurse." At any rate, it was Mr. Cook who humorously described them as "This Way to the Baby" and "Isn't he a Beauty?" In the first, the child lies on a white cloth on the ground at the foot of some rocks near a stream; a man is pointing him out to two others, and two more are following them over a foot-bridge. In the middle distance is a village and a castle-crowned hill, and across the background are blue hills beneath a blue sky. The figures are all in brightly tinted costumes, and the whole is a delightful pattern of brilliant colours. By what is perhaps merely a curious coincidence, the child is almost identical, though in reverse (as if seen in a mirror), with a child drawn in outline by Dürer on a page of sketches* made by him in Venice in 1495—probably the very year in which Giorgione painted this picture likewise in Venice. Certainly Dürer "dürerised" his drawing, as he did in every case when he sketched an Italian original; but I find it difficult to believe that there is no connection between the two.

In the second picture a woman receives the child from one of a group of three men. Further back, two others are seated talking, near a herd of kine. There is again a village in the middle distance and blue hills behind. I have never wavered in the assurance that these pictures

* The drawing is in the Uffizi and photographed by Braun, No. 962.



Dürer Drawing of 1495 (above)
Detail of Painting by Giorgione (below)



were painted by the youthful Giorgione and no other. Some of the figures are actually the same models as those employed by him in works universally accepted as his, but the palette is his likewise, and so are a quantity of little tricks of design and of technique, as well as certain weaknesses too tedious to set down in long-winded detail.* The dealer from whom I bought the pictures stated that they had been in the Duke of Ossuna's collection, and this statement is verified by the seal on the back of each. They likewise had written labels bearing the name of Carpaccio, and the seal of the Venetian Academy, doubtless impressed when permission was given to export them. Their last Italian owner was revealed as follows.

By a strange coincidence, just when I was finding these pictures at St. Jean de Luz, Mons. Ugo Monneret de Villard was enquiring for them in Italy. In the process of preparing his book on Giorgione† he had examined in the Communal Library at Verona a manuscript catalogue‡ of the Albarelli collection, entitled "Gabinetto di quadri o raccolta di pezzi originali esistenti in Verona presso il sig. Gio. Albarelli, disegnati da Romolo Caliarì, con illustrazioni. Verona, 1815." In this volume he noticed two carefully made outline drawings of pictures which had been attributed to Carpaccio, but which he had no difficulty in recognising as compositions by Giorgione in his early

* I may point to the little stones in the foreground, and the way they are painted; to the slender rods carried by some of the men; to the peculiar cliff, with its little overhangs, and the brown vegetation on it; to the attitudes of the people seated on the ground; to the peculiar feet of the men; and to the drawing of the figures, especially of the man seen directly from behind.

† "Giorgione da Castelfranco." *Studio critico*. Bergamo, 1904. pp. 26 and 106.

‡ MS., 1847, Cl. Arti, Ubic. 82. 6, Busta 5.

period. After his book was already printed, but before it was issued, Mons. de Villard saw the photographs of the pictures themselves, which were published in the *Burlington Magazine*, and thus was enabled to insert in time an extra page, with copies of the reproductions facing the reproductions of the drawings, and a note which runs as follows—

“Nel numero di Novembre, 1904, del *Burlington Magazine*, H. Cook annunciava di aver scoperti nella Collezione di S. Martin Conway due quadri che egli attribuisce al Giorgione. Tali opere non sarebbero altro che le due tele una volta alla raccolta Albarelli in Verona, e come si parla a pag. 106 e di cui due disegni sono riprodotti a pag. 26-27 del presente volume. La scoperta, posteriore alla stampa del volume, mi obbliga ad aggiungere questa nota, indicando che io credo tali opere non le primissime del maestro di Castelfranco, ma posteriori al quadro degli Uffizi ed all' *Allegoria* della National Gallery.”

It happened, also, that at this very time Mr. Herbert Cook was bringing out a revised edition of his Giorgione (London, 1904), and its pages were already printed off. Knowing his interest in the great Venetian master, I made haste to show him the panels as soon as they arrived in London, and he not only at once published them in the *Burlington Magazine* (November, 1904, p. 156), but felt obliged to insert an extra leaf into his book, with the following note:—

“As the second edition of this book goes to press comes the announcement of the discovery and acquisition by Sir Martin Conway of two pictures which appear to be by none other than Giorgione himself. Not only so, but, from



GIORGIONE
17½ × 25½ in.

Facing p. 112

the nature of the subjects represented and the style of painting, these panels would seem to have formed the last two of a series, of which 'The Birth of Paris' was the first portion. 'The Discovery by the Shepherds of the Young Paris' and 'The Handing Him over to Nurse' naturally complete the story, of which the first scene is given in the engraving (referred to at p. 147), whilst the statement of the Anonimo that the 'Birth of Paris' was one of Giorgione's early works is amply confirmed by the style of the newly found paintings, which must have been produced by a very youthful hand. Indeed, there is every reason to hold that they ante-date the little pictures in the Uffizi, and thus rank as the earliest known works of the young Giorgione."

The third monograph on Giorgione, which has been published since these pictures were brought to light again, is that by Dr. Ludwig Justi (Berlin, 1908, 2 vols.).

Dr. Justi, after citing the Albarelli catalogue and describing the pictures, which he saw before they had been cleaned and restored, continues: "Immerhin erkennt man noch bei starkem Licht das Raffinement der Kostümfarben, zart gebrochene Töne, weit entfernt von der hiergegen harten Art der Belliniani. Die 'Auffindung' ist (relativ) besser erhalten, man hat hier auch noch einen richtigen Eindruck von der gesamtwirkung ganz hell, gleichmässig in den Valeurs, sehr zart, sehr reich in den Nuancierungen (z.B. in dem ins Violett gehenden Berg, in der Blaugrünen Ferne, den braunen Häusern); feinste Lichteffekte an dem Rasen, den Häusern, den Bäumen des Mittelgrundes. Insbesondere bei Kräftiger Beleuchtung kommt diese Feinheit und dierser Reichtum der Farbe ausserordentlich heraus und überzeugt den Beschauer das es sich hier um

ein werdendes Genie handelt, einen Koloristen von Gottes Gnaden, der nur im Zeichnen und Komponieren noch nicht gewandt ist. Das Kind ist in dem eigentümlich rötlichen Ton modelliert wie auf der Epiphanie und den Bildern bei Lord Allendale und Mr. Benson. In der Bewegung hat das Kind—worauf mich Sir Martin aufmerksam gemacht hat—eine nicht völlige, aber doch auffallende Ähnlichkeit mit dem Kind auf Dürer's bekanntem Studienblatt in den Uffizien; linke Hand und linker Fuss etwas abweichend. Sollte man danach die 'Auffindung' und ihr Gegenstück um 1494 datieren? Giorgione wäre 1494 sechzehn oder siebzehn Jahre alt gewesen; das würde zu dem Charakter der Conway-Tafeln passen: das Koloristische Genie ist schon da, anderes noch anfängerhaft. Freilich ist dies nur ein Kartenhaus von Schlüssen, da die Übereinstimmung zwischen Dürer und Giorgione sich ebensogut aus einem gemeinsamen Vorbild erklären kann."*

In theory it seems well to leave a picture as you find it, with all the scars of time visible on its face; but in practice, when the paint insists on parting company from the panel and forms dome-like excrescences resembling bubbles, which presently crack and fall off, there is nothing for it but to call in the aid of the most skilful and experienced restorer that can be found—in other words, Commendatore Luigi Cavenaghi, of Milan. The pictures under discussion received what I may call "first aid" at the hands of Mr. Roger Fry; but the mischief was progressive, and had to be radically taken in hand and stopped once for all. When they were last exhibited at the winter

* Loc. cit., Vol. II., Nos. 18 and 19, and pp. 121, 122.

exhibition of the Burlington Fine Arts Club in 1911-12,* all the best authorities urged me to have the work put in hand without delay, and the two panels were accordingly shipped off to Cavenaghi's without further delay. Several months later we followed them to Milan. It was a joyous moment when we found ourselves once more in our kind friend's presence and saw one of our pictures on the easel before him.

It was not the same studio to which we had been taken just twenty-five years before by Morelli, but it was the same kind welcome that greeted us, the same hand that clasped ours in friendly greeting, and the same common interest that continued to unite us. Even a quarter of a century ago Cavenaghi was the best restorer of Italian pictures in the world—so Morelli was never tired of proclaiming, and so all men agreed. If he was unrivalled in 1887, it is easy to understand at what height of pre-eminence he now stands, with the added knowledge that comes from an unexampled experience in dealing with the most precious Italian paintings in the world. I was naturally more than a little anxious to know what a restorer, through whose hands several works by Giorgione had already passed, might have to say about our pictures, for nothing can afford so good an opportunity of learning the hand of a master as the necessity of dealing so intimately with his work as a pre-eminent restorer like Cavenaghi is called upon to do.

By an admirable stroke of good fortune there was another Giorgione under treatment by him at this very

* The pictures in their then condition are reproduced by photography in the illustrated catalogue published by the club, "Early Venetian Pictures," London, 1912.

time. It was the "Orpheus and Eurydice" belonging to the Lochis collection in the Bergamo Gallery. This panel, out of its frame, was standing on an easel and faced us as we entered. Of course, one of the first questions I asked was whether Cavenaghi was satisfied that our pictures were by Giorgione. He replied, "Undoubtedly," and, taking up one of them and the Bergamo picture, he placed them close together upon a single easel, remarking, "You see, either of those might be a piece cut out of the other," so absolutely did they agree in colour scheme, in forms, in construction, and in all the elements that unite to make a picture. It would not be possible for anyone in presence of the two, thus displayed together before him, side by side, without frames, and under the same illumination, to doubt for one instant that both had been painted about the same time by the same artist, using the same colours, similarly mixed and employed.

It occurred to me at that moment that I had before me a concrete example of what the labours of a connoisseur are directed to providing. A connoisseur is a person who, by long years of training and observation, has educated himself to retain in his mind, stored up and able to be produced at will to his internal vision, the aspect of any one of a multitude of works of art, and that not merely in a general sense, but in every detail of colour, texture, form, and chiaroscuro. What a thoroughly equipped and competent connoisseur of painting can do is to call up a mental image of any one of a great number of pictures with such vividness as to see its details and its totality almost as clearly as if the picture itself were before him. When he comes into the presence of a picture new to him he must be able to place beside it, before his mind's eye

as it were, on the same easel, any other picture he has elsewhere seen with which to compare it; in fact, to be able mentally to produce just such a comparison as we had actually and visibly before us at that moment.

Anyone who has the capacity, even in moderate degree, of estimating the character and quality of works of art at all can tell without difficulty whether two juxtaposed pictures were painted in the same style, about the same time, by a single artist. Not even an angel from heaven could persuade a man whose eyes had beheld that kind of identity that it did not exist. Seeing in this case is ineradicable conviction. The trouble with art critics is that few of them possess any such capacity of vivid memory as is requisite to produce the materials for the kind of comparison that anyone can make who has the two objects to be compared actually present side by side. Such a gift is of the rarest. Those who lack it and would yet pose as art critics endeavour to supply the lack of vivid pictorial memory by the use of photographs. Something can, indeed, be accomplished by their aid, but not very much. Where the characteristic feature common to two works lies in the possession by both of an identical colour scheme, that cannot be shown by any photograph. Hence it comes that truly magistral judgment on such matters is the prerogative of very few men indeed. Only after long years of trial, by contact, discussion, and repeated triumphant establishment and acceptance of their opinion by their gifted and capable fellows, do these few ultimately attain such authority. An admitted master of this type was Morelli. It would be invidious were I to attempt to set down the names of living masters of the art, but at any given moment they are known, and their opinion, if never

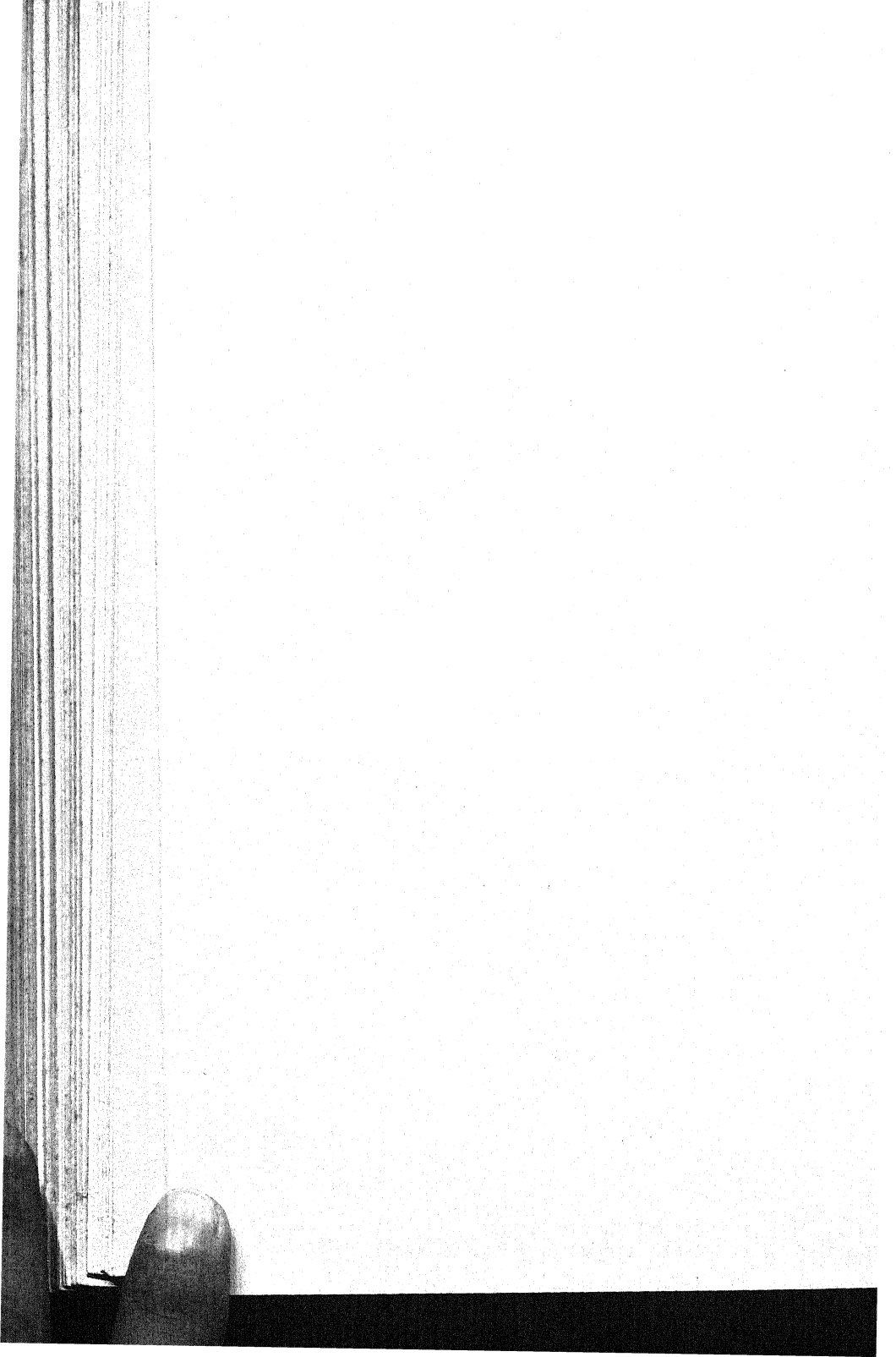
to be regarded as papally infallible, is always weighty with the discerning and weightiest with the best.

From St. Jean de Luz to Malta is a long jump, which I must invite the reader to take with me, for there also, by unusual luck, a good Venetian picture awaited us. We once had the chance to land there for a few hours when returning from the East. After seeing the usual sights I found my way into an antiquity shop. The dealer greeted me with the assurance that he had nothing of any consequence to sell, as H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh had made a clean sweep of all his best things the day before. We had, in fact, passed his ship going out as we entered the harbour. The effect of this statement upon me was the comfortable assurance that if I did find any good thing in the shop its quality would have escaped the dealer's observation; and so, in the event, it proved. Among a number of trumpery canvases I discovered one whose appeal was instantaneous. Not only was the picture obviously from the atelier of Tintoretto, but its subject was both excessively rare and very charming. It depicts the Virgin as a young maiden before her marriage, when, according to the legend, she lived apart with other holy virgins in the Temple precincts. A common subject with old Christian painters is the Dedication of the Virgin in the Temple by her parents, when she is shown leaving them and going up the Temple steps, the High Priest waiting to receive her at the top. Titian's famous rendering of this incident is well known to all lovers of art. The legend relates that she and her fellows devoted their spare time to needlework, and the Virgin is very rarely depicted thus occupied. A drawing of this subject was sold at Obach's a few years ago. Tintoretto shows her



SCHOOL OF TINTORETTO
15 × 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.

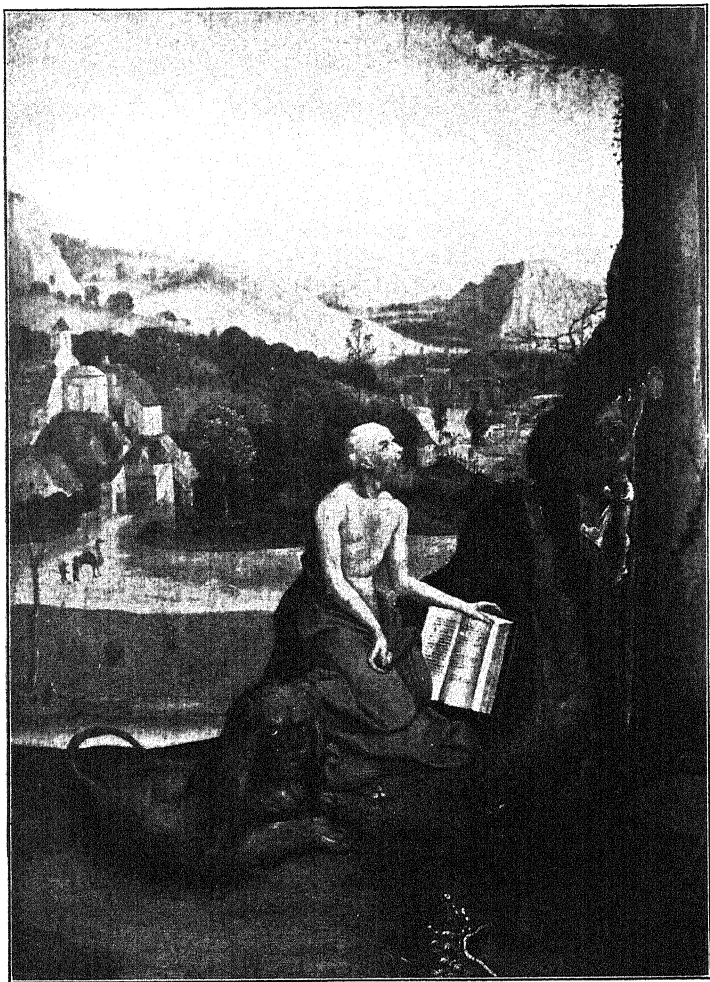
Facing p. 118



engaged in making Venetian lace. The white cushion on which it is being worked is on her knees, and, at the moment, she is about to thread her needle. In form and colour the picture is delightful. Unfortunately its condition left a good deal to be desired, for, though the head is perfectly preserved, the hands have almost been rubbed away, and have lost much of their proper and original form. The thread which passed between the fingers has likewise vanished, so that the meaning of the gesture is not at first obvious. Notwithstanding these disadvantages, the picture retains much of its original charm. It is painted on a small scale, the figure being about half life-size.

One other picture, of which a reproduction is here for the first time published, requires a brief mention, though no adventure attended its acquisition, unless, indeed, a visit to the shop of Messrs. Carfax and Co. may be so described, for it was there I bought it, on the prompting of my old and valued friend, Mr. Robert Ross. It belongs to that group of early sixteenth-century pictures of the School of Bruges, which are united together under the name of Adrian Ysenbrandt. In former days they used all to be attributed to Mostaert, but now we have learned that he painted in quite a different style. The subject is St. Jerome in Penitence, with an extraordinarily festive-looking tame lion keeping him company. Such St. Jerome pictures of the School of Bruges, where the landscape forms the real subject and St. Jerome is merely brought in as an excuse, present a marked resemblance to pictures of the same saint, under like circumstances, turned out by the followers of Bellini. St. Jerome, the scholar, was a favourite saint at the time of the Renaissance of learning. Dürer, Carpaccio, and many others depicted him in his

comfortable study hard at work. The opportunity of introducing a wide landscape background made his Penitence almost as useful an incident for the new class of landscape painters as were, for instance, "St. Christofer Fording the River," or "St. John Baptising," or the "Flight into Egypt." Those who delight in the landscape backgrounds of that generation of artists will recognise the charm of this carefully executed and well-preserved example.



YSENBRANDT

16 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 12 in.

Facing p. 120

CHAPTER X.

FURNITURE

EVERYBODY nowadays collects eighteenth-century English furniture and Elizabethan and Jacobean oak. It is not so very long ago since no one wanted either. When I was an undergraduate at Cambridge a few superior members of the University used to manifest their "culture" by equipping their rooms with old chairs, Cromwell tables, oak coffin-stools, an oak bureau, an Arundel reproduction of Perugino's "Crucifixion" over the mantelpiece, and a few other Arundels and photographs of Old Masters on the walls. They bought the furniture for the most part at Jolly's, and we already began to say that it was no longer possible to pick up good pieces at the prices that had obtained a few years before. I remember the "young" Jolly of those days telling me how, when he was a boy, his father's great warehouse was full of Chippendale and the like furniture, especially chairs, which no one wanted to buy. They were such a drug in the market that he and his brothers actually destroyed some without suffering severe retribution. The fun was, he said, to throw a sturdy mahogany chair into the air in such a way that when it alighted it should come down on one foot, and start the joints of all four legs at once. He said that chairs which he could remember to have thus destroyed in the irresponsibility of boyhood he now knew to have been really fine Chippendale,

the like of which he could only obtain to-day at very high prices.

Those days were already past before my time, but plenty of good things were still to be had at prices within the reach of a very moderately equipped purse. Of course, I refer only to genuine things. Such forgeries as were then beginning to be made were too coarse to deceive any but the ignorant. Genuine oak court-cupboards were to be had any day for about four pounds apiece. A Cromwell table cost perhaps thirty shillings, if it was a good one with spiral legs. Solid-backed oak chairs were to be had in numbers. It was about this time that I furnished our first house, and we bought almost everything at Jolly's. We were horribly and foolishly economical, and went without all sorts of delightful things which we would now gladly suffer much privation to obtain. Almost every old English town then had some such dealer as Jolly, with one or two barns or warehouses filled with what would to-day be considered most desirable pieces. The greatest dealers of the present time can no doubt show a selection of much finer things, but the local dealers have only here and there one or two pieces, on hand at any moment, at all comparable with the general run of what was offered then on all sides, and but slowly unloaded. Carved four-post oak bedsteads, great bulbous-legged oak tables, fine Elizabethan court-cupboards, were never exactly common, but anyone who had a taste for such things could find them without a prolonged search, and could purchase them at a cheaper rate than that obtaining for good contemporary furniture.

As during the 'seventies and 'eighties of the nineteenth century the love of old things grew at equal pace with the knowledge that came from an accurate study of them, this

condition of the market passed away. What had at first been a taste of the refined became a fashion among the wealthy, as I have said ; when fashion sets in any direction the day of the small collector is over. Before that happened one could, for instance, purchase, as I in fact did, at a single visit to one shop, the following lot of things for a total sum of about forty pounds : two Cromwell tables (one very large), an oak court-cupboard, six Hepplewhite mahogany chairs and two armchairs, six other late eighteenth-century chairs, a stuffed mahogany armchair, a carved oak napkin-press, a three-storeyed dumb-waiter, a mahogany wardrobe, a brass-bound mahogany wine-cooler, a carved oak Bible-box, an oak coffin-stool, a Jacobean oak chest, an oak bureau, and two little tables, besides other things I have forgotten. All these pieces, after thirty years' service in my possession, are still in as sound condition as the day I bought them. They are plain, honest examples of the work of their day ; none of them at all rare, but all quite genuine. The dealers' shops all over England abounded with that kind of old furniture. It was a pleasant time for a young collector.

Abroad, the search for furniture other than the fine work of the French eighteenth century began later than in England. Switzerland was a particularly good hunting ground. The only trouble was that, buyers being few, the local dealers made little attempt to "stock" old things at all. I remember, for example, going into a second-hand furniture shop at Lausanne, and being taken by the dealer away off to a kind of cow-shed beside a field. Not only was the cowshed full of good things in a bad state of repair, but quantities of old materials lay about in the field. I took away thence the fronts of a splendidly carved walnut chest and of a fine cupboard, both substantially sound, but the backs had

been rudely knocked away, as not worth transportation. Quantities of panelling also lay about, the lining of rooms from houses that had been pulled down or modernised, and this panelling was not offered for sale for its own sake, but only as material to be worked up in new combinations. Even the packing-boxes were often knocked together out of such remains!

The remote villages of Switzerland at that time often retained excellent pieces of old furniture, employed for communal purposes or in the chalets of wealthy villagers. These were only too easily purchasable, and much work of admirable quality and great local interest drifted away into foreign possession before the communes realised what they were parting with so lightly. Thus, I remember to have been offered at Stalden in the Visp valley one of the finest carved chests I ever saw. It was in the priest's house, and was used for holding the supply of candles for church purposes. Doubtless it had so served for many generations, and the wax had thoroughly toned the surface of the wood within and without to an excellent richness. The front of this great chest was divided into three panels, and in each was carved in high relief a noble design of lilies. I was informed that it could only be sold by resolution of the village meeting held in the winter, but that if I liked to offer a very moderate sum for it, I should no doubt be permitted to acquire it. The matter slipped from my memory, and the chest went elsewhere; at all events, it is no longer at Stalden.

Of all existing types of old furniture, chests are the most numerous, and cover the longest period of time. The pre-dynastic Egyptians buried their dead doubled up in chests or baskets, and numbers of these receptacles still exist,

though they would not be desirable for use as modern house furniture. There are ancient Greek chests, such as that wonderful box inlaid with gold found in a tomb at Kertch. There are Coptic chests of various dates, standing on legs, and with their panels agreeably carved. It is not, however, till the thirteenth century that we find any English chests, save some few rudely hollowed tree-trunks bound with iron which may be earlier, though no one can date them. The real starting-point for England was the issuance by Innocent III. of an order that every church should provide a box in which to contain the offerings of the faithful, to defray the cost of the Crusade. The very considerable number of thirteenth-century chests that still remain in English country churches were probably made in response to this command.

I once had the chance of obtaining one of these church chests, but some remnants of good feeling—a horrible impediment to a collector—prevented me from availing myself of it. There is a church in one of our southern counties which, only a dozen years or so ago, remained in a truly seventeenth-century condition of neglect. The patron was himself the rector, and he was at loggerheads with the squire and all his flock. Grass and weeds grew waist-high in the churchyard. There was no path to the church door, except a trodden track used almost solely by the parson, for no one attended his services. Within, all was decay. The windows were broken, and birds flew in and out. The rotten rafters were foul with old nests. The seats or pews were all falling to pieces, so that hardly a bench remained that had not lost its legs from one end or the other. The pavement was broken to pieces, and the floor was all over deep holes. There was a decrepit stove in the middle of

the nave, and an iron pipe-chimney meandered in a crooked curve up towards the roof before bending off with final direct determination and making its way out below the eaves. The pulpit was broken and unstable, but I suppose it can have been seldom used. Some fine monuments were decaying, their heads and hands broken, and the pieces lying about. But what excited my cupidity was a genuine thirteenth-century chest and two Gothic helmets, which had belonged to the monuments of late fifteenth-century knights. The wicked old parson would have let me have them, and goodness only knows how I came to escape from that temptation. In due course of nature even he ultimately died, and his successor was a man of different type. Now the chest is carefully preserved. The helmets are replaced on the iron pegs to which they belonged. There is a new roof, new seats, new pavement, and all things decent and in order.

The earliest existing English chests, made for domestic rather than church use, are a group from the county of Kent, all apparently the work of a single maker. They are "pin-hinged," and consequently have sloping ends; the fronts are carved with a simple but effective arcading grouped under triangular pediments. Word reached me that a chest, which I gathered was of this kind, had been sold to a local dealer out of a cottage at East Peckham. I sent a trusty foreman builder to bargain for it. He had the good sense to take a cart with him, and promptly carried it off. I happened to pass this cart on the high-road as I was motoring in haste to catch a train. I just caught a glimpse of the chest, with its feet in the air, and of its carved arcading, as we hurried by. That momentary view sufficed, and I knew that one of my ambitions was fulfilled. Later

examination showed it to be in very good condition, except that it had lost its original lock, and that the lid had been renewed. Curiously enough, a few weeks later, my neighbour, Mr. Mercer, acquired another, almost identical in design with mine; but whereas mine is faulty above and perfect below, his is imperfect below, but has the original lid and lock in excellent condition. These chests, and two or three more like them, date from the first half of the fourteenth century, before the Black Death.

Fifteenth-century chests in England are very rare, until we come down to the introduction of linen-fold, and most of the linen-fold chests we see in museums and country houses date from the first half of the sixteenth century. Abroad, however, it is still possible to find large, iron-bound chests of late fourteenth and fifteenth century work. I bought one at Basle, and two others at Paderborn. The latter came to us in the peculiarly determined fashion which sometimes happens. We applied to see the Cathedral treasury, but a meeting of bishops was going on in the sacristy, and we had to wait an hour till that was over. So we said we would fill up the time at an old furniture shop we had been told of. We were strolling across to it when I said, "This does not seem to me to be the kind of place where we shall get anything." "I feel, on the contrary," said my companion, the prophetess, "that there is something waiting for us there, and I believe it is a Gothic chest." Sure enough, there it was, right in front of us as we entered the inner room of the shop. It was an iron-bound chest with the clamps ending in fleurs-de-lys. The Basle chest is similar, so that the type was probably common all over Germany in the later Middle Ages. The South German example, though

of equal date with the Westphalian, is, as might be expected, superior to it in design, proportion, and workmanship.

Such foreign furniture as has been intended for me by the Fates has usually been bought in matter-of-fact ways, but a purchase made at Genoa was rather an exception. I had been visiting the Brignole Sale palace with a friend, and the talk had fallen on the dating of furniture. "How do you know that a particular chair is of the seventeenth century, for instance?" was a question put to me. We were standing at the moment before one of the famous full-length Van Dyck's, in which there is a chair. So I replied, "If you were to find a chair just like the chair in that picture, you would be able to date it confidently to about the time of Van Dyck's visit to Italy, say, 1625." Half an hour later we went into a very poor antiquity shop down near the quays, and there was what might have been the very chair in the picture, the woodwork in good condition, though the upholstery was in rags.

Another time, in London, I was attracted by a chair of unusual form, adorned with embossed leather and carving. Being in doubt as to its country of origin and date, I did not purchase it. The next day, at the house of a descendant of Admiral Byng, I noticed in the middle of the hall an exactly similar chair. "Please, what is that chair?" I asked. "Why, don't you know? That's the chair in which Admiral Byng sat to be shot" I returned to the shop in London, and carried away its fellow.

No part of Europe produced so much solid and on the whole good furniture in the seventeenth century as the Low Countries. One has only to look at the pictures of Dutch middle-class interiors to be assured how well-equipped they were with desirable chairs, tables, cabinets, cupboards, and

bedsteads. These survived in great numbers down to the nineteenth century, when they went altogether out of fashion, and suffered much destruction. A friend of mine, who possessed both sense and opportunity, made a great collection of the handsome tall cabinets which are now again so much sought after. He used to buy as many as he wanted for about five pounds apiece. He used them for panelling a long gallery in his Hertfordshire home. Perhaps he may now regret having dealt so cavalierly with cabinets of an elaborately decorative character which certainly have lost in value by being dismembered. His room, however, into which these materials were fitted by an able architect, is a very beautiful place, and the result, in this case, can be held to justify a method of dealing with old treasures which would not be generally commendable.

The Dutch oak cabinets which are amongst our own possessions are good examples of the type, and one of them is of quite unusual dimensions. They are inlaid with a black substance which is probably precious wood, though I have sometimes had a suspicion that in one case it may be whalebone. I have examined all the Dutch cabinets I have been able to see closely during several years, in search for inlaid whalebone, and never yet confidently identified it. In the great days of whaling, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the supply of whalebone was so large, and the uses for it so few, that the price had sunk to twopence per pound. An English ivory-turner at Amsterdam, John Osborne by name, invented in the year 1618 a method of uniting together thin pieces of whalebone into a black mass, which became so supple and soft that it could be pressed into any shape in a metal mould, or it would take the impression of even the finest lines engraved

on a plate of metal. The substance was as black as jet, and is recorded to have been used to ornament mirror-frames, sideboards, mantelpieces, knife-handles, and so forth. For this invention, which doubled the price of whalebone, Osborne received a pension for ten years from the States General. This fact is proof how general must have been the use of the material, and yet, with one known exception, whalebone has not been identified on any piece of Dutch manufacture. The conclusion would seem to be that it is generally hidden under the designation ebony or horn.

The exception to which I have alluded is certain oval medallion portraits of Frederick Henry, Prince of Orange, and Amalia his wife, which were impressed in whalebone by John Osborne himself in 1626, his name and theirs being impressed on the back of them. There are examples of these in the British Museum and other collections, and I own a pair which were given to me by the late Mr. Henry Willett. I have often seen them in catalogues described as made of horn, from which, indeed, they are only to be distinguished by the perfect blackness and brilliancy of their surface. Whether Osborne's discovery of this method of treating whalebone led to the similar treatment of horn, so commonly employed in Holland in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, I am not able to assert.

It is not a far cry from old furniture to sculptured wooden figures. I have already related how we bought one such group at Caddenabbia after the adventure of the Victor Emmanuel. Two or three others were picked up in England—the most notable, and one of the finest wooden figures existing, having been found in a Brighton shop under the tamest possible circumstances. I was unfortunately led

to part with it about twenty years later, to my unutterable regret, and it is now in the New York Metropolitan Museum. The story with it was that it came out of a Surrey chapel, and had been the property of a Lady Ashburton. My own impression was and is that probably it was made in the fourteenth century in the Ile de France, rather than in England. The figure represents St. John the Evangelist.

The saint, however, whom I was always looking out for was my own patron, St. Martin. Not that I felt called upon to burn incense before him, but that I needed him to fill a niche contrived in the restored part of Allington Castle, as a kind of signature; also I desired to carve over his head this motto from the Persian poet, Labid ibn Rabiáh:

"The mountains remain after us
And the strong Towers when we are gone."

Ultimately it was my daughter who found St. Martin for me at a Brussels dealer's. It is rather a late and chubby figure, but it retains its old colouring on man and harness, and the gilt breastplate shines afar. The trouble was that the niche was too large for the figure, which, besides, was of rather tender wood, unsuited to last long in the open air. So we decided to have a copy made of it in the same Douling stone which is used in our works of repair, and we found that there was in the neighbouring town, Maidstone, a stone-carver willing, and said to be able to carry out the work. In due season the stone St. Martin was finished, and displayed for a day or two, to the public wonder, in a shop window in the town. He had a triumphal journey out on a cart, and astonished everyone that met him, his brilliant colouring and well-fed, cheerful aspect producing an irresistible good temper in all beholders.

Fortunately, his niche faces north, or I think we could scarcely have supported his new radiance without pumping mud upon him. Time, however, has toned him down, and rendered him a less obtrusive and soberer personage. After he had stood a year or two in his niche, word was brought to me that the stone-carver wanted to be allowed to come and see the Castle courtyard. Permission was given, and he came. I am told that he stood for an hour gazing enraptured at the work of his hands. It appears that he was about to emigrate, and wished to enjoy a last long look at his masterpiece.

In the same Brussels dealer's, and at the same time as St. Martin, was found an admirable fifteenth-century stone figure of St. Columba—not the Celtic saint, but the Belgian saintess of that name. This little lady in her voluminous drapery might have walked out of one of Van Eyck's pictures. There was a niche in a thirteenth-century wall awaiting her, and she took her place in it at once, and has seemed happy there ever since, with a blue mosaic made of the old Cairo pot fragments for background. There is a reredos with ten scenes from the life of St. Columba in the parish church of Deerlyk, near Courtrai, in West Flanders—so my old friend, Mr. W. H. James Weale, informs me. I have an impression that our saint came from that neighbourhood.

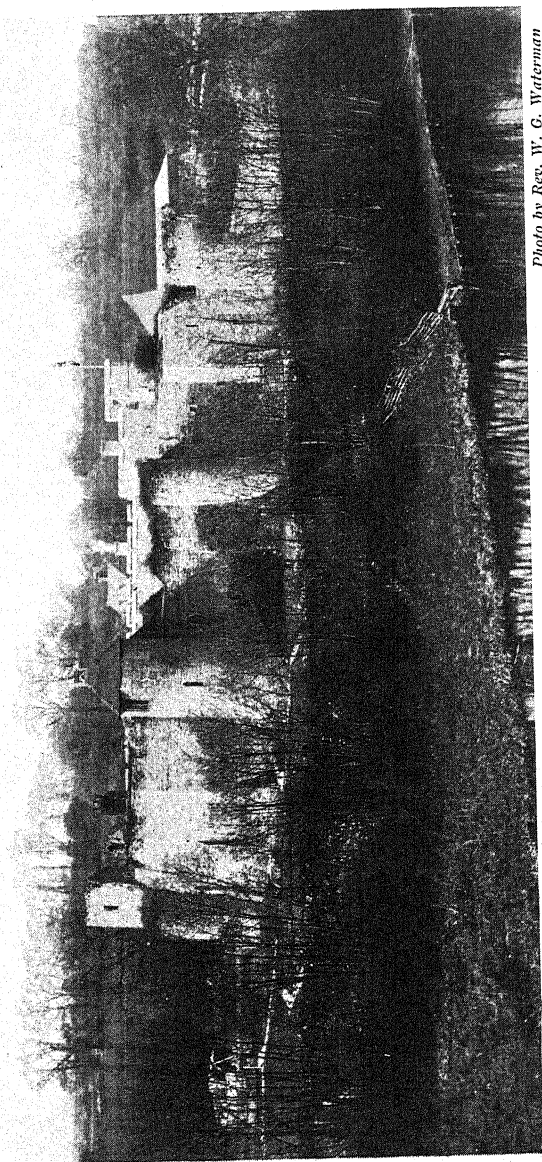


Photo by Rev. W. G. Waterman

ALLINGTON CASTLE IN 1909, FROM THE EAST

CHAPTER XI.

HOW WE FOUND A CASTLE

ON the 15th of May, 1905, I inserted the following advertisement in the *Times*:—

“Wanted to purchase, old manor-house or abbey, built in the sixteenth century or earlier, with old garden, not much land, no sporting facilities, preferably five miles or more from a railway station.”

The only replies that I received were two: the first offering me a stuccoed “castellated mansion, suitable for a hotel or hydro”—a real beast of a building; the other describing a true mediæval castle in such fascinating detail that it seemed impossible to believe that a building so delightful could exist. It told of moat and towers, of two courtyards, of high embattled walls, of dovecots, tilting-yard, and I know not what other high-sounding reminiscences from the days of chivalry. What made this still more surprising was the fact that this wonderful castle was said to exist not ten miles distant from my own birthplace, and yet I had never heard tell of it, unless my rather clear memories of more than half of the first seven years of my life were at fault. So incredulous was I as to the existence of a castle at Allington, near Maidstone, in any such completeness of preservation as the reply to my advertisement asseverated that I hardly thought a journey down into Kent worth while. As, however, we were starting a few

days later to motor to Brighton, we thought we might as well go round by way of Maidstone and see upon what basis of truth this attractive superstructure was reared.

The drive that we took that beautiful 20th of May proved to be a turning-point in our lives, little as we expected any such result when we set off. There was only a dim feeling within us that to "collect" an old building might be delightful, and that, at all events, to hunt for one was a form of the collecting sport that we had not experienced. Save for the introduction of motoring, even that hunt would never have occurred to us. The joy of the road, however, had taken possession of us with the acquisition of our first car—a 7 h.-p. Panhard—in 1903, and we had spent every possible fine day of leisure in the two years that had followed in scouring the roads and lanes of England and France, seeking out remote abbeys, castles, old houses, and monuments of all kinds, and finding a continuously increasing joy in that research. Thus, as we made our way out of London through Bromley that brilliant morning, we were not thinking so much of an old building to be acquired as of one to be seen.

A little more than a mile short of Maidstone a finger-post indicated "Allington" as to be sought down a rather narrow side-road much encumbered with farming impediments. It led us downhill, past various quarries of Kentish rag sunk deeply into the ground, with always the wide stretch of the North Downs broad open before us and the Medway Valley in front at their feet. We passed the little village church, beneath some great elms, and we must have had the possibility of buying the place in our minds, or one of us would not have said, "Perhaps there's where we shall lay our bones." A little twist to right and left, over a

hideous quarry tram-line, a further run down a steepish lane, past some cottages and a barn, with a dreadfully disfigured acre or two of ground covered with a tarpaving manufactory right ahead, and then, when we were finally concluding that there was no castle and that we had been deceived, we turned the corner of another barn, and there it was. Neither of us will ever forget that moment; we fell victims to the beauty of the ruin at once, and have remained enthralled ever since.

It was not so much the outside that captivated us, for that was wholly enveloped in the densest coat of ivy I have ever seen on a building. An examination of old prints and photographs shows that down to the first decade of the nineteenth century ivy was still absent. It was beginning to grow up the walls about 1820. It was still only a patchwork covering in or about 1860. In 1905 it had surged over the whole exterior and had obliterated every architectural feature. Only the archway of the gate-house was free. As old orchards and other trees stood in front of the ruins, they were practically invisible, except from near at hand. Moreover, only a small portion of the moat still contained a little water. The rest had been so filled up and grassed over, that the gate-house bridge was buried, and only appeared like two walls limiting the roadway on either hand.

When, however, we passed under the long dark entrance arch and found ourselves in the first courtyard, with its green lawn, climbing roses and creepers, its charming Tudor hall-porch, and all the other features we were destined to know so well, the peaceful harmony of the place, its delicate beauty, its sense of aloofness from the modern world, its atmosphere of antiquity, overwhelmed us with

such a flood of delight that words will not avail to express the half of it.

A moment later we were received by Mr. Dudley Falcke, the good man who had stepped in at a critical moment and saved the place from destruction. Ten years before he had come down from London and found it about to be abandoned, the last inhabited fragment in one corner of it being considered no longer fit even to house the two labourers' families that had succeeded the farmers who used to dwell in it. Then the courtyard was full of pigs, hens, and mess. Everything was decayed, the roof rotten, the floors full of holes—neglect rampant. He saw in a moment the possibilities of the place, and, having obtained a lease of it, he set to work and turned it into the loveliest little house in Kent. He attempted no restoration, but contented himself with repairing what had been the farm-house—the kitchen-house of Tudor days—and living in it. It was to the surroundings that he devoted his attention. Being an expert and energetic gardener, and especially rose-grower, he made the wilderness blossom, and the result, as we saw it, was of surpassing beauty.

That meeting with him was the foundation of a friendship, only just lately rounded by his death. It is impossible for me to write even briefly about Allington Castle without coupling with it the name of the man who actually saved it from destruction at a most critical moment. Under his guidance, then and several times afterwards in the following weeks, we made close acquaintance with the ruins, which he had studied as fully as was possible so long as they were smothered in ivy. Unfortunately he loved the ivy for its own sake, and did not realise the destruction it was bringing to pass. And, of course, it was picturesque.

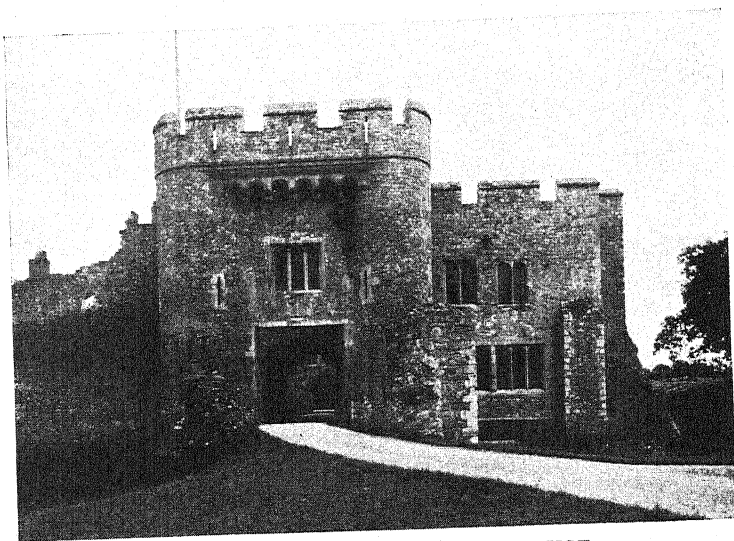
Poets of the last hundred and fifty years have sung ivy into fame. The "ivy-mantled tower" is a thing of dreams and romance. Poets might, perhaps, effect a like miracle with snakes. In fact, the ivy is the boa-constrictor of plants. It was hugging the oaks to death in the neighbouring wood, it was pulling down the walls and towers of the castle, and it was digging out great caverns at their foundations.

Not many miles away there existed a few years ago the noble ruins of a castle at Leybourne. Ivy invaded them, and in no long time pulled down the whole of one of the principal walls and of a tower. The owner will not allow it to be cut off, and the rest, including a magnificent fourteenth-century gate-house, is bound to fall. There is no greater curse to ancient buildings than ivy. The popular impression is that ivy is of great antiquity. I have often been shown ivy-stems of great thickness and informed that they are hundreds of years old. It is an error. Ivy grows very fast. I have been able to prove that a stem nine inches thick was much less than a century old—scarcely more than half a century. An examination of a great number of engravings of the old buildings of Kent proves that there was little ivy on any of them about the year 1800. The plague of ivy became rampant in Kent about the middle of the nineteenth century. If ivy had been the normal clothing of old buildings three hundred years ago, hardly one of them would have been standing to-day.

When we drove away toward Brighton after that first short visit there was no doubt in the mind of either of us but that we must buy Allington. The matter was not even discussed on that basis. We would buy the lease from Mr. Falcke, and the freehold also. But about the time

we were approaching Tunbridge Wells a fundamental difference of outlook became gravely apparent. To me it was self-evident that we must repair the disroofed and disfloored rooms of the mediæval parts that were still upstanding, and make the repaired house our principal or only home. The companion of my travels and my life saw chiefly the beauty of the place as it was. She would repair the existing inhabited part and use it as a week-end cottage to come down to from London. We agreed to let the future decide, but to begin by getting possession; and so it was done.

Not then, nor for many months and, indeed, years afterwards, did the full history of the place become known to us. It was only a week or two ago that we established for the first time the unsuspected fact that a small portion of the building is actually Roman. The first thing to be done was to tear off the ivy—a work of many weeks. Tons of it were consumed in persistent bonfires. It was a sacrifice for the time. The walls at first looked gaunt, and one side was actually ugly. Then, however, we were able to read much of the history of the building, and we became likewise of one mind as to the necessity of repairing the ruin, which was seen to be in a parlous state of decay. It had either to be let fall or propped up. We devoted a year's careful study to it before coming to a decision. We dug away accumulations of soil many feet deep which had piled themselves against the foot of the walls. We excavated the foundations of walls that were otherwise gone. We made an elaborate large scale plan of the whole, and we investigated every existing detail that could throw light upon what had once existed. It was a work full of interest and sometimes of excitement. Revela-



ALLINGTON CASTLE: GATEHOUSE



ALLINGTON CASTLE: OUTER COURTYARD

tions and discoveries followed one another in quick succession.

In this way we mastered the history of the building from the beginning, and this is the outline of what was finally proved. The site has been inhabited from the end of the Stone Age. Doubtless the earliest inhabitants lived in pile-dwellings erected in a swamp by the side of the Medway. By degrees the débris of what they brought in, used, and consumed accumulated till the site of the village rose into dry land, and its margin became a ditch or moat. Many stone implements have been found within the precincts, but no excavation has been made down to the level of prehistoric habitation. Within the moat there was, no doubt, a stockade. When the Romans came, they must have found a British moated and stockaded village on the site, the inhabitants being in the late Celtic stage of civilisation (like those at the neighbouring Aylesford). A few of their burials, with characteristic pottery, have been revealed close by in recent years in the process of quarrying.

The Romans erected some kind of a stone building within the village enclosure and a villa outside it. It is highly probable that they quarried the Kentish rag, of which the Roman Wall of London was built, out of the hill close to the villa. Roman interments have been found in the immediate neighbourhood. After the Romans the Normans were the next to leave lasting traces of their coming to Allington. They set up a mound, surmounted no doubt, as usual, with a wooden redoubt, just outside the moat to the south. The village enclosure became the bailey of this castle, and its palisade was presently replaced by a stone wall, portions of which remaining show the characteristic masonry associated in these parts with the

name of Gundulf. Still within what may be called Norman days, a stone castle was built inside the moat, and the mound castle without was then probably abandoned. This stone castle was destroyed as a place of arms by order of the King in the year 1174, though considerable fragments of it were left standing, and some can still be identified. Thereupon an unfortified manor-house was erected, and some rooms of this still exist and are again inhabited.

This manor-house and its lands were purchased by Sir Stephen de Penchester (otherwise Penshurst) and his wife, who, in 1282, obtained a licence to crenellate, and thereupon built the castle that now stands, including within it the twelfth-century manor-house and considerable fragments of the walls of the first stone castle. From them it descended, generation after generation, several times through heiresses, till, in the reign of Henry VII., it being then very much out of repair, it was purchased by Sir Henry Wyatt, and by him very thoroughly restored. He added to it a cross building, dividing the original courtyard into two, and including one of the earliest long galleries in England, perhaps the earliest; also a porch, and many new windows, fireplaces, and other existing details, besides a quantity of fine panelling, now, alas! no longer to be found.

These were the days of Allington's greatest glory, when it received within its walls kings and cardinals—Henry VII., Henry VIII., Anne Boleyn, Katharine Parr, Cardinal Wolsey, and other notable personages. Sir Henry was succeeded by Sir Thomas Wyatt, his son, the poet, statesman, and diplomatist. Either he or his contemporary, Surrey, was the inventor of English blank verse, the first, or some of the first, lines of which may have been written in his Allington study. Sir Thomas Wyatt the younger

did not long enjoy his inheritance, for, when still a young man, it was his misfortune to become the leader of the Kentish rebellion (a protest against Queen Mary's Spanish marriage), whereby he presently lost his head. Allington then escheated to the Crown, and thereupon fell on evil days. Presently, in Elizabeth's reign, it did, indeed, come into the possession of the Astley family, but they never lived in it, and it evidently fell into neglect. About this time, also, the great hall, the great chamber, the chapel, and the north-east tower were burnt down and not afterwards repaired.

Early in the seventeenth century the whole place was once more put into some kind of order for letting, and it was hired by members of the Best family, who were Roman Catholics. For them a chamber in the east tower was converted into a chapel, whilst over the whole of the unburnt part of the building, except the Long Gallery, a top storey of timber and plaster was added. That was the last addition. All the remaining history of the building is one of decay. In the nineteenth century the place was divided into two farm-houses, which were inhabited by different families side by side till about the year 1840. The condition of the building is shown in certain drawings by Turner, which are preserved in the Tate Gallery, and in many engravings. About 1840 the top storey and the floors were removed, for the sake of the oak, from all except the Tudor kitchen and a neighbouring room. The remainder was abandoned to ruin. The still surviving farm-house was cut up into two cottages, and they in turn were about to be abandoned when, as above related, Mr. Falcke intervened, and the long tale of neglect and destruction came to an end.

Thus the existing building and surrounding wall contain specimens of work of the Roman, Norman, early English, Tudor, and Jacobean periods, and nothing later except my own scrupulous repairs. The site has been continuously inhabited from pre-historic times, and has, perhaps, the longest record of occupancy of any house in England. Its documentary history, as worked out by my daughter from the archives preserved in the Record Office, is unbroken from the days of Edward the Confessor. We know for certain the name of every owner from that time to the present day. That we should have been able to find within thirty-four miles of London a building unique, historically and architecturally, and one in which the great bulk was still in tolerably complete preservation—in preservation, in fact, more complete, relatively to its size, than any other castle known to me in England, and that we should have been, further, able to acquire it, was the greatest stroke of good fortune that ever came to me as a collector of ancient works of art. The castle was, in fact, the crown of our collection, and long before the year of probation had passed we had decided to undertake the repair of it and make it a worthy casket to contain the rest.

At this time of writing the process of repair is completed as far as some three-fifths of the building is concerned. The Long Gallery, which was burnt down in 1818, or thereabouts, has been re-erected above its surviving ground-floor. The west wing and gate-house have been refloored and reroofed. Solomon's Tower, as the ancient donjon tower was named of old, has had its knocked-off corner replaced. The missing battlements have been renewed, in the gaps between those that remained. The ancient wall of enceinte

on the site of the old palisade has had its missing parts replaced on their old foundations.

If all that was required had been to repair the castle itself, we should be yet further advanced by now. But there were worse horrors to attend to than the mere ravages of time. All the land surrounding the castle had been mishandled in the most appalling fashion. Not only had it been so badly farmed that it was little more than a wilderness of stinging nettles and docks, but some acres of the land had been turned to hideous uses. Immediately in front of the principal façade, machinery for crushing stone and turning it into tar pavement had been erected. The ground was saturated with tar, loaded deep with barren stone-dust, and piled high with huge heaps of tarred chips ready for transport by barge or cart to distant places. Another portion of the river front was a large manure wharf. Close by were a row of ugly modern oast-houses, recently rebuilt after what ought to have been a merciful fire. Moreover, a crooked right-of-way led close in front of the gate-house, and destroyed all possibility of privacy. These various disfigurements had to be removed one by one. A new, shorter, and better road was made, far out of sight, which the public authority accepted in lieu of the previous muddy and berutted track. The tar-paving business was moved away, and another site purchased for it out of view down the river. The tar-stained ground was covered with a thick layer of good soil, on which grass presently consented to grow. The oast-houses were pulled down, and the stone of which they were composed given back to the castle from which it had been robbed. Acres of nettles were trenched and cleaned. The deep railway cutting, down which the tram-line ran that fed the stone-crusher from the quarry, was filled in with

about 50,000 cubic yards of quarry refuse and soil. A new drive was contrived, and the whole area was fenced in ; the wooded, now long-abandoned, quarry, from which, as tradition states, the stone was fetched that built the Tower of London, was brought again into service, and by means of paths and other careful attention was rendered a delightful adjunct to all the rest.

In discussing any old picture, sculpture, or other the like work of ancient art, it is always necessary to consider what has been done to it in the nature of restoration. A castle is merely another kind of work of art, as delightful to collect, to study, to repair, to live with as is a fine picture. If I were rich I should be greatly tempted to collect several castles. I know of a dozen or more that could be repaired and made into glorious modern homes, comfortable, convenient, and in some cases far more "livable" than most modern houses. To begin with, a castle, properly repaired, is silent. It is the most reposeful kind of a dwelling. Next, it is draughtless, if the windows are made to fit. The walls being always of very considerable thickness, it follows that, properly supplied with a scientific system of heating, it can be maintained at an even temperature. Once the walls have been thoroughly warmed in summer, it is easy to keep them at an even, mild temperature all through our coldest winters. At Allington it is impossible to guess what is happening to the weather without in the matter of temperature, unless one goes out to feel. I have noticed that this uniformity of warmth—a steadily maintained temperature of about 63 degrees—strikes visitors with surprise ; whereas it is just about what ought to be expected, provided the work of repair and refitting is properly done. Finally, by a due employment of asphalt and concrete, a castle interior

can be made and maintained absolutely dry. The ground flooring is of concrete, on which is laid a layer of asphalt carried also about three feet up the walls in the form of a dado. The oak flooring is laid on the asphalt, and closely united to it with pitch. The other floors and roof are of reinforced concrete, and the roof is covered with asphalt. Being flat, and surrounded by the battlements, it makes the most perfect promenade imaginable.

I mention these rudimentary facts on purpose, because I have found them novel to most of the people who have come to see my work. It has been my hope that what has been, and is being done at Allington, might suggest to other people a like operation of conservation, repair, and consequent rehabilitation of other ancient castles now in ruins. A ruin is a building in rapid process of decay. No ruin will last for any considerable number of centuries. You have only to look at Buck's views of Old English buildings in the first half of the eighteenth century, and compare them with existing remains to realise how much has vanished in a little more than a hundred and fifty years. Only a building that is being used is likely to last. Restoration of a castle, in the sense of reconstructing it as an ancient fortress (after the fashion of Pierrefonds), is anachronic. The reparation of an old building, and the alteration and extension of it to adapt it to modern needs—as Sir Henry Wyatt in Tudor days repaired Allington—is legitimate and praiseworthy. Every existing old feature that can be retained or recovered should be. The addition of anything else is permissible, provided that what is added is for use or beauty, and is actually useful or beautiful. Success is attained where the work of the past is scrupulously conserved, and a beautiful and useful result ensues. Such are

the principles which we have endeavoured to follow in our work at Allington. The result is successful as far as the work has gone.

I have only one more matter to mention before bringing these discursive chapters to an end. We intended Allington Castle to be made a kind of casket to contain such works of art as we had acquired, or might in future acquire. Into its repaired walls we worked, as opportunity offered, the various sculptures we had acquired at different times and in widely Sundered localities. We found places in the windows for our fragments of stained glass, on the walls for our hangings, and in the various chambers for our old oak and other furniture of all dates. But, alas! we were doomed to one great disappointment; in no room that we have yet made, or, in the small part of the ruin that remains to be repaired, can make, is there a single wall on which pictures can be effectively hung. The necessary form and position of the windows casting a low horizontal light makes it impossible to illuminate pictures properly, or to avoid reflections. Moreover, most of the rooms have of necessity windows in both their opposing long walls, for all the rooms are relatively long in comparison with their width, which is that of a medium length oak beam—about thirteen feet clear from wall to wall. Hence there are always cross lights. To see a particular painting one must stand on a special spot, and generally look at it obliquely, and then the light is bad. That is the ounce of bitter in our pound of sweet, and it is a bitter that unfortunately cannot be neutralised.

I will not, however, take leave of my readers on a note of regret. As I look back on thirty years of what I may call sporadic collecting, because collecting has been only

the byplay of an otherwise rather full and busy life, I can truly say that it has been to me, and to those dear to me, who have shared its excitements, its disappointments, and its occasional successes, a great joy and an abiding interest. It has enabled us to take our share at times in rescuing from imminent destruction, and often in preserving some noble art treasures of the past. It has filled our recreations with interest; it has occupied us in a manner which has been at all events harmless to others, and not injurious to ourselves. We have enjoyed the passion of the hunt without killing, and our trophies are not consumed.

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